

# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## MR. BELSHAM'S MEMOIRS

OF THE REIGN OF

### *GEORGE THE THIRD.*

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“ To the most careless observer it was apparent that, in numerous instances, facts were distorted and disguised ; that the most invidious construction was invariably annexed even to the most indifferent actions ; that every thing was seen through the medium of false and artificial colourings ; that the dignified candour which gives weight to an accusation was wholly wanting. His calmness was settled rancour : his warmth the phrenzy of rage and revenge.”

BELSHAM, Vol. IV. page 17.

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BY

MAJOR JOHN SCOTT.

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London:

PRINTED FOR J. OWEN, NO. 168, PICCADILLY.

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1796.

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ORBITAL

ON

MR. BELSHAM'S MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE OF

GEORGE THE THIRD.

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MAJOR JOHN SCOTT

London:

Printed for J. Gurney, No. 11, Strand.

1796



( 11 )

PREFACE.

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**T**HE first volume of Mr. Belsham's Memoirs were printed when the Lords were upon the point of proceeding to judgment, on the long depending trial of Mr. Hastings. One hundred and forty-five pages in the third volume of the Memoirs, are occupied in the strictures on the public conduct of that gentleman, equally unmerited and unjust.

To obviate the effect of Mr. Belsham's misrepresentations, I hastily printed and published some remarks upon those strictures, and pledged myself at a future time to prove, that in almost every page in his Memoirs, which had a relation to India, Mr. Belsham had been equally partial and prejudiced.

The sale of the pamphlet was however stopped two days after the publication, from an apprehension, probably not ill founded, that though Mr. Belsham had agitated a subject, which in common candour ought not to have

been partially mentioned at so critical a period, offence might be taken by both Houses of Parliament, by a reply, when the matter in dispute was under the discussion of the highest court of justice in England.

Subsequent to the acquittal of Mr. Hastings, Mr. Belsham has published a second edition of his Memoirs. I had entertained sanguine hopes, that he would himself have corrected the errors in his first edition. I have been disappointed. In the following sheets, therefore, I have performed my promise, and I hope I have proved that Mr. Belsham has not only most grossly calumniated his countrymen, but that he has endeavoured to cast a stigma upon Great Britain, which upon a cool and dispassionate examination she will not be found to deserve.

When England shall again enjoy the blessings of peace, it is highly probable that some person, better qualified both by industry and impartiality for the task than Mr. Belsham, may feel a laudable desire to transmit to posterity, a faithful relation of the wonderful events which have marked the present reign. To such an historian, the means by which the British Empire in India was acquired, and

and has been retained and improved, will be a very important subject of investigation; it will afford some relief to him as well as to his readers, since truth must compel him in other parts of his history, to narrate the loss of empire in the West, and the alarming increase of debt at home. An historian of impartiality, will not trust, as Mr. Belsham has done, to the miserable rants of parliamentary orators, nor to the anonymous pamphlets of disappointed men. He will examine facts coolly and impartially; and if the following sheets should induce a candid historian to treat the subject fully and fairly, the end and the only end that I have in view by this publication, will be completely answered.

Though the Memoirs of Mr. Belsham, at the critical period of their first publication, were calculated to do Mr. Hastings all the injury possible, yet now they cannot hurt him. His acquittal has given very general satisfaction at home—It met the approbation of every dispassionate man in Europe, and it was an event which caused universal joy in India, both amongst Europeans and natives.

To his Majesty's Ministers nothing that affects Mr. Hastings can any longer be interesting.



resting. The best informed amongst them, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, Lord Grenville, and the late Lord Mansfield invariably declared, that he had rendered great and essential services to his country. The title of "Saviour of India," was first bestowed upon him by Mr. Pitt, and that of "the Chatham of the east," which Mr. Belsham thinks him so ill entitled to, was originally conferred upon him, by Mr. George Hardinge, the nephew of Lord Camden.

Nor is any question in which the character of Mr. Hastings is involved, now of consequence to the managers. To speak of them collectively, their conduct has been highly honourable, from the moment that Mr. Burke quitted parliament. Mr. Hastings is, I believe, the only Englishman who has been allowed a fair trial, on an impeachment by the Commons of Great Britain, when the event of the trial was uncertain.

The Earl of Strafford, though originally impeached by the Commons, perished ultimately by a different process. His prosecutors, doubtful of the verdict of the Lords, suddenly made themselves the judges of that unfortunate and devoted nobleman; and then  
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by violence the Lords and the King were compelled to concur with the Commons, and to pass the bill of attainder.

The Whig Lords impeached in the reign of William the Third, were not acquitted upon the merits of the case, but in consequence of a dispute between the two Houses, which originated with the Commons, when, according to the opinion of every historian, they had discovered the weakness of their accusation, and the firmness of the Lords. The Earl of Oxford was acquitted in the reign of George the First, in consequence also of a dispute between the Lords and the Commons.

But however we may lament the violence with which the trial of Mr. Hastings was conducted, the intemperate and abusive language uttered in the course of it, the length of time which it occupied, with the enormous expence attending it, every shilling of which has in fact been paid from the Exchequer to both parties; all impartial men must join the Marquis of Lansdown in opinion, “ that the  
 “ grave, solemn, and judicial manner in  
 “ which the Lords proceeded at the close of  
 “ the trial, was highly to their honour. It  
 “ was

“ was also to the credit both of Government,  
 “ and of those concerned in the prosecution,  
 “ that nothing like party or influence appear-  
 “ ed, and that a cause which had lasted seven  
 “ years, and had attracted the attention and  
 “ wonder of the world, would ultimately be  
 “ determined by the fixed rules of law and  
 “ justice\*.”

Mr. Fox, though he went to many unjustifiable lengths while under the guidance of Mr. Burke, though on various occasions he betrayed an ignorance of the affairs of India, which the youngest ensign in the service would have been ashamed of, yet acted so fairly and honourably at the close of the trial, as to convince every impartial man, that the constitutional language which he held, when the term “ acquitted felon,” was applied to a man whom the law had declared innocent, was not used for mere party purposes.

Mr. Sheridan, whose invention, if I may be allowed to use the word, aided by uncommon eloquence, actually carried the question of Impeachment in the year 1787, had at that time the justice to declare, “ that a vote of

\* Debrett's Debates.



“ the House of Commons did not go to make  
 “ Mr. Hastings criminal. The Commons  
 “ were not acting as judges, but as prosecu-  
 “ tors. The judgment was placed elsewhere;  
 “ and if Mr. Hastings should be acquitted,  
 “ unworthy indeed should he hold that man,  
 “ who either in or beyond the walls of Par-  
 “ liament considered him *otherwise than inno-*  
 “ *cent*\*.”

If I may trust to what I deem very good  
 authorities, those two gentlemen have had  
 the justice to express their approbation of the  
 remuneration which Mr. Hastings has receiv-  
 ed from the East India Company, and his  
 Majesty's Ministers. Mr. Michael Angelo  
 Taylor is the only person in Parliament who  
 expressed any thing bordering upon a dissent  
 to the measure, and even that little gentleman  
 rather questioned the right to remunerate,  
 than the propriety of remunerating Mr. Haf-  
 tings.

Mr. Burke, retired from public life, op-  
 pressed by those domestic calamities which  
 crowded fast upon him in the latter years of  
 the trial, disappointed, most miserably disap-

\* Debrett's Debates.

pointed,

pointed, by the late determination of his Majesty, to acknowledge the French Republic, and to open a negotiation for peace with the Directory—Mr. Burke, who exerted his utmost talents to plunge this country into a war with France, upon principles which the King's Ministers have disavowed—Mr. Burke, who has seen the total destruction of the nobility and clergy of France, in whose cause, as far as was in his power, he armed half Europe, can no longer be an object of resentment to any man. To pass over his assertions relative to India was impossible, because Mr. Belsham places a reliance on his accuracy on this subject, though upon all others he treats him with the utmost contempt; I trust, however, that I have treated even Mr. Burke with much more delicacy than Mr. Belsham has observed towards him.

Mr. Windham, the confidential friend and the enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Burke, who appeared to adopt "all his eccentricities and "follies," as Mr. Belsham calls them, was a private senator when the Impeachment commenced. He is now a Minister, and has held a very high office during a most arduous and calamitous period. Surrounded as he was  
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with difficulties, equal to those which Mr. Hastings so successfully surmounted, he must have discovered the very essential difference between theory and practice: he finds, from experience, that to censure measures as a logical member of Opposition, in peace, and to conduct the affairs of a mighty empire in war, require very different abilities. I am fairly entitled to suppose, that as he has acquired knowledge, his opinion of Mr. Hastings has very materially altered; that he is now sensible of the superior merits of that Statesman, because he has not opposed the remuneration, granted to Mr. Hastings by the East India Company, and confirmed by the Board of which he is himself a member, on the declared ground of important services rendered by Mr. Hastings to the nation.

Mr. Grey took a share in the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, rather, as I conceive from a view of displaying his talents in Westminster Hall, than from any other motive. The part assigned to him by Mr. Burke was not considerable; but by one of those whimsical chances, of which very many occurred during the trial, it happened that Mr. Grey undertook to prove that Mr. Hastings acted

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contrary



contrary to the law of nations, to the practice of all civilized states, and to the usage and custom of war, as well as derogatory to the honour of Great Britain, when he wrote two private letters to Colonel Popham, in which he gave it *as his opinion*, that certain treasures, contained in a fortress then besieged, ought, on the capture of the place, to become the property of the besieging army. These letters, Mr. Grey affirmed, were only fit to be addressed by a captain of a banditti to his lawless crew. He affirmed, that the effects produced by them were most dreadful, not less than the indiscriminate plunder, without regard to rank, age, or sex, of the wretched people who surrendered the fort.

Mr. Belsham, who as blindly follows Mr. Burke, as Mr. Grey did, at that time, concludes the same story nearly as Mr. Grey did, in the following words.

“ The *castle* being accordingly surrendered  
 “ within the time specified in the articles of  
 “ capitulation, by which an allowance of 15  
 “ per cent. was reserved to the Rannee, were  
 “ nevertheless shamefully and outrageously  
 “ broken, the person of the Rannee and her  
 “ attendants grossly insulted, and their ef-  
 fects

“fects *plundered*. Notwithstanding the efforts and representations of Major Popham the commander, a man of humanity and honour, no redress was obtained from the governor.” Such was the representation of Mr. Grey, and such is the false account given by Mr. Belsham. Let us now see how it appears from the representation of Colonel Popham himself, given upon oath, whom Mr. Belsham truly represents to be a man of honour and humanity, and by other officers.

Cheynt Sing after having been defeated in two general actions, retreated to Bidjygur, one of the strongest fortresses in Indostan, a place which Mr. Burke in his charges, and in his speeches, chose, in the true spirit of chivalry to call a *Castle*, and Mr. Belsham willing to copy all his absurdities, denominates it also a *Castle*. As the British army advanced to the siege of this fortress, Cheynt Sing was alarmed, and after employing all the elephants and camels in his army in conveying away his treasures, fled to the Maratta frontier, carrying with him at least a million sterling in specie and jewels. He left a garrison in the fortress, and left there also his mother, his wife, and a number of women, with such

treasure as he was not able to carry off himself. When the British army arrived, the fortress was summoned, and the commanding officer refused to surrender it. A formal siege commenced, and when a breach was nearly effected, the Rannee offered to quit the fortress on condition that she and her attendants should be allowed to pass the British posts without examination. On this proposition being reported to Mr. Hastings, he wrote to Colonel Popham, that he would ratify any condition into which he should enter, but that he thought the proposition was made with a view of depriving the besieging army of what he conceived to be their right, the property that was then in the fortress. She afterwards made propositions, to all of which Mr. Hastings said he gave his full consent, except in one article, allowing her hereafter to exercise an independent authority in the Zemindary of Benares. As the siege advanced, a practicable breach was effected, and preparations were made for storming the fortress. Proposals were then made for a surrender, which were agreed to; the conditions were, that the fort should be delivered up, and that the Rannee should receive 15 per cent.



cent. from the treasures of Cheyt Sing contained in it. She and her attendants were permitted to quit the fort, and they imprudently chose to do it by night. It happened that by a mistake in issuing the orders, an out post near to the fort was not withdrawn in proper time, and in passing by, the Rannee and her attendants were stopped and plundered of some trifling articles they brought with them. Colonel Popham expressed very great concern at this unfortunate accident, and full reparation was made a quarter of an hour after the accident happened. The terms of the capitulation were most scrupulously fulfilled, and the Rannee received 15 per cent. from the treasures according to the agreement, though Mr. Belsham has the effrontery to say, that she received *no redress*. Of the kindness and delicacy with which she was treated, she entertained a very strong sense, and fully acknowledged it; nor did she impute the accident that had happened to any neglect of Colonel Popham, still less to the orders of Mr. Hastings, who was fifty miles from the fort, and who knew nothing of it until it was reported to him, when he instantly directed, that every redress should be granted

granted for the injury she had unintentionally sustained; but the injury was repaired before his orders arrived. Such is Colonel Popham's account. The simple question that remains is this, whether, as Mr. Grey asserted, it was contrary to the practice of all *civilized states*, and to the laws and custom of war, for a man, situated as Mr. Hastings was, to give it as *his opinion*, that the property in a fortress besieged, and on the point of being taken by storm, unless it was surrendered upon terms, would become the property of the besieging army. The miserable and wretched sophistry of Mr. Belsham and Mr. Grey, in detailing this subject, must be apparent to every man. They first call Bidjgur *a castle*; next they represent it as *the residence* of the Rannee, though in all human probability she never saw the place in her life, until she accompanied Cheyt Sing there after his defeat; then they say, that the treasures *in the castle* were the *Rannee's treasures*, though unquestionably they were such parts of Cheyt Sing's treasures as he had not the means to carry off with him.

Such is the account given by Colonel Popham, and confirmed by other testimony. Let

us now see what, upon another occasion, were Mr. Grey's sentiments of the rights of war, and the practice of civilized states.

In the year 1794, Sir Charles Grey, a most respectable and gallant officer, in conjunction with another most respectable officer, Sir John Jarvis, took the islands of Martinico, Guadaloupe, and St. Lucia. Resistance was made, not only by the officers commanding the fortresses in each island, but generally by the planters. Subsequent to the surrender of the islands, proclamations were issued, requiring a contribution from the inhabitants, in lieu of general confiscation. The propriety of these proclamations was much questioned, and the subject was brought before the House of Commons, where it was argued at very considerable length. It was admitted by all parties, that the property in a besieged fortress did of right belong to the besieging army, unless disposed of otherwise by the terms of the capitulation, agreeably to the practice of civilized nations, and the usage and customs of war. Mr. Grey, in the debate, very much distinguished himself, by his speech in defence of the rights of the army; but every word which he uttered was in contradiction



tradition to his speech in Westminster Hall. Bidjygur sustained a siege of five weeks, and when the fort was on the point of being taken by storm, a practicable breach having been effected, and a mine ready for springing, which would have rendered the success of the troops in a storm positively certain, the garrison offered to surrender on certain terms. The conditions were accepted, and scrupulously fulfilled. The accident that happened, when the Rannee quitted the fort, had no sort of connection with the surrender. The treasure had previously been secured, and her sixth part of it was to be paid to her at a future period, and was faithfully paid. The trifling articles she carried with her, and those belonging to her attendants, were of no value; but even those were returned, by Colonel Popham's account, a quarter of an hour after they had been seized. When Mr. Grey, at the close of the Impeachment, spoke a second time, he cautiously avoided saying a word relative to the Bidjygur prize money, which he made the strong point in his speech when he opened the charges, an undoubted proof, in my mind, that he was conscious of the weakness of the cause which he had supported. I am  
intitled,

intituled, therefore, to conclude, that Mr. Grey is now heartily sorry for the part which he took against Mr. Hastings, and that the acquittal has given him real satisfaction.

The rest of the Managers took so very inconsiderable a part in the business, that it is needless to mention them. The late House of Commons, much to its honour, interfered no further than to declare, that an impeachment voted by a preceding Parliament, was not abated by a dissolution; and to come to a vote, that the trial should not be eternal, by directing that it should close with one additional article. They had too high a sense of the justice which the country owed to an individual, to follow the dreadful precedent set them in the reign of Charles the First, when an impeachment was dropped, and a bill of attainder against the person impeached was substituted in the place of it.

Mr. Francis, equally the hero of Mr. Burke and Mr. Belsham, has at length retired from public life. If I have been under the necessity of exposing the ignorance of this gentleman, it is because his authority upon India questions appears to be *decisive* with Mr. Belsham. Mr. Burke also has represented

sented him as the man from whom they had all learnt their lessons, thereby making him the author of all the vexation, trouble, and expence, which attended the Impeachment. To Mr. Francis, however, nothing that concerns Mr. Hastings is now of the smallest consequence.

If the preceding observations are just, it must be clear to every reader, that neither Mr. Hastings himself, nor the King's Ministers, nor the Managers, taken collectively, or individually, nor the Members of the last Parliament, can feel the least interest in any point that has a connection with the Impeachment. Nor is it possible, that in the present age, any man of common candour will give credit to Mr. Belsham: but with posterity the case may be very different; he has, with wonderful ingenuity, misrepresented a great variety of important transactions. He will not hereafter be supposed to have had a personal enmity to an individual, and being born an Englishman, he will not be suspected of having had a wish to degrade and to disgrace his country. I own, therefore, that I feel an anxiety to furnish some future historian with materials, that may induce him not to  
adopt



adopt Mr. Belsham as an authority, until he has examined into the truth or falsehood of his assertions; and if such an effect should be produced by the following sheets, my purpose will be completely answered.

The Editors of the New Annual Register\* have been pleased, in their last volume, to speak of my Remarks in the following terms.

“ The Remarks on those Passages in Mr. Belsham’s Memoirs which relate to the British Government in India, consist of *severe and virulent strictures* on that gentleman’s account of the politics of the East, and the administration of Mr. Hastings. Mr. Belsham *may have been deceived, in some points*, by the documents on which he relied; and the propriety of his deciding *so peremptorily* on the conduct of Mr. Hastings, while his trial was pending, *may be disputed*: but this writer has brought forward *no evidence* to shew that the indignant account which he has given of the oppressions practised on the inhabitants of Indostan, *is entirely unfounded*, or that the historian, as he asserts, *is guilty of gross and wilful misrepresentation.*”

\* 1795.

The Remarks, which these gentlemen are pleased to notice, were principally confined to the strictures which Mr. Belsham had passed on the public conduct of Mr. Hastings. Those strictures were published at so very important a moment, that I thought it right to expose the errors of Mr. Belsham: in so doing, I did not hesitate to say, that he had received his materials from some pupil of the Franciscan school, or that he had been guilty, if he wrote them himself, of gross and wilful misrepresentations, unless he acknowledged that he was so careless in the selection of his materials, as to be utterly unworthy of the name of an historian. My Remarks, as I have already observed, were suppressed very soon after their publication, and for the reason which I have already assigned.

I have now done what I then engaged to perform, I have gone through his history from the period of the acquisition of the Duannee in 1765, to the year 1793. Let me appeal to the candour and good sense of the Editors of the New Annual Register, and let me ask them if, in the following instances, Mr. Belsham can elude the charge of gross and wilful misrepresentation, except by a confession  
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that he has been unpardonably negligent in the selection of his materials.

In his first volume, he truly describes the fatal effects produced in Bengal by the famine of 1770. But he imputes this famine to two causes, which did not operate in the slightest degree to produce that dreadful calamity; 1st. The monopoly of salt, beetle nuts, and tobacco, established by Lord Clive in the year 1766, and next to the mode adopted by the same nobleman, of letting the lands to farm to the highest bidder. The consequences resulting from these measures, were as Mr. Belsham expressly says, that the natives were reduced to the utmost misery and distress, that the ground remained untilld, that the people were under the necessity of feeding upon unwholesome roots, and that famine and pestilence in horrid combination desolated the land. Here is no medium. The assertions of Mr. Belsham are true, or they are false. If true, the character of Lord Clive ought to be transmitted with infamy to the latest posterity, and with such a load of guilt upon his mind, it would indeed be probable, as Mr. Belsham so uncharitably insinuates, that Lord Clive could not bear the torment of his own reflections.



reflections. But if false, what must we think of Mr. Belsbam, who has thus libelled his country, and a meritorious individual? That they are false is a fact to which millions now living can bear testimony. Whether the monopolies were justifiable or not; whether it was politic or impolitic to permit Mahomed Reza Cawn to let the lands to the highest bidder; certain it is, that the famine proceeded from a cause unconnected with either the one plan, or the other, and was totally occasioned by a failure of the periodical rains in the autumn of the year 1769. God forbid, that I should be so deficient in charity, as directly to accuse Mr. Belsbam as the author of this foul calumny. I dare say he met with it in some one of those abusive pamphlets, with which the press teemed when Lord Clive was the object of a relentless and virulent persecution, in which a general took the lead, whose arrogant and founding language at a subsequent period, did not exceed the brilliant actions of Lord Clive. But the true use of history is to correct, not to perpetuate the falsehoods of party. Calumny spreads much more rapidly than truth; a lively young lady\*,

\* Miss Helen Maria Williams.

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resting I suppose on Mr. Belsham's authority, has said in her last letters from Paris, that "a Clive has famished Asiatic provinces," and the falsehood has also been asserted by some of the orators of the mountain, in their debates. A man who has British blood in his veins, ought to be more zealous for the honour of his country. If, from a sacred regard to truth, he is occasionally compelled to relate any circumstance which brings dishonour upon the nation, it is natural to suppose that he would do it with concern. But so zealous is Mr. Belsham to bring forward every circumstance which can tarnish the glory of Great Britain, that if he can meet with an anecdote of such a tendency, he inserts it in his history, without any enquiry into the truth or the falsehood of the fact.

In the Encyclopædia Britannica, under the head of Bengal, the learned editors of that valuable work, describe with as much force and truth as Mr. Belsham has done, the fatal *effects* produced by the famine, but having taken proper pains to enquire into the *cause* of so dreadful a calamity. They say,

"This dreadful famine was occasioned by  
 "a preternatural drought. In this country  
 "they

“ they have two harvests, one in April, called  
 “ the little harvest, which consists of the  
 “ smaller grains. The second, called the  
 “ grand harvest, is only of rice. But by a  
 “ drought which happened in 1769, the great  
 “ harvest of the year *failed*, as did also the  
 “ little one of 1770, *which produced the dread-  
 “ ful consequences already mentioned.*”

The Abbé Raynal in that romance which he entitles a Philosophical and Political history of the East Indies, has inserted many gross and contemptible falsehoods. But this vain writer, a Frenchman by birth, who misses no opportunity of shewing his envy, and his hatred of England, has not in this instance presumed to go the length of Mr. Belsham in defamation. He imputes the famine to its true cause, and uses almost the same words, as the editors of the Encyclopædia.

Let then the editors of the New Annual Register turn to Mr. Belsham's first volume; let them see if there is a single expression in it, which can lead his readers to believe that there was any drought in the year 1769; let them see if he does not in express terms impute the famine to the monopolies of salt, beetle nut, and tobacco, and to the letting  
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the lands to the highest bidder; then let me ask them if they do not agree with me, that Mr. Belsham is utterly unfit for the character he has assumed, or that he has been guilty of *gross and wilful misrepresentation.*

Mr. Belsham in his third volume affirms, that at the storm of Anampore, on the coast of Malabar, four hundred beautiful women perished in the general massacre.

This audacious falsehood was first inserted in the New Annual Register for 1784; but the editors fairly and honourably declared in a subsequent volume, that they had been imposed upon. Mr. Hipperfly distantly alluded to this story in Parliament in 1790, and afterwards made an apology for his mistake. General Macleod, who commanded the army on the Malabar coast when the event was supposed to have happened, related the circumstance in parliament. The falsehood, by his account, originated from a letter written by an officer to a person at Bombay, very fond of the marvellous, in order to impose upon his credulity. That person in his next letter to England, mentioned the supposed circumstance to his correspondent; it appeared in print; the governor and council of Bombay,

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transmitted

transmitted to the Court of Directors, the fullest contradiction of this calumny. Their letter was read at an India court, and printed. It was afterwards printed by order of the House of Commons, to rescue the army which General Macleod had commanded, from the foul imputation which had been cast upon it. The contradiction appeared in every newspaper in London, and in the parliamentary debates; yet Mr. Belsham, from an eagerness to insert every thing in his history which can bring disgrace upon his country, or from a carelessness unworthy an historian, chuses to take the fact as originally stated in 1784, but pays no attention to the complete refutation of it, though his Memoirs were published so late as the year 1793. In detailing the events of Mr. Hastings's administration, he is not accurate in a single instance of any importance.

His account of the different modes of collecting the revenues of Bengal, and of the effects produced by them, is absolutely fabulous. His authorities are generally the charges of Mr. Burke, or the speeches of the managers, though Mr. Sheridan had expressly said that they *ought not to be believed* in any assertion

tion which they made, and did not afterwards prove. In his history of the Rohilla war, he omits many very essential points, and misrepresents others. In his account of the rise and progress of the Maratta war, he omits to mention the only ground on which Mr. Hastings took a part in it, and asserts that he acted contrary to the Directors' orders, although it was fully admitted even in the House of Commons, that his measures were justified by their express orders.

I have already shewn that Mr. Belsham has misrepresented the transactions at Bidjygar as grossly as Mr. Grey mistated them. He further says, that Cheyt Sing was rescued from his arrest by *the populace of Benares*, although it was proved beyond all cavil, that not one of the populace assisted in the rescue, which was effected by four thousand regular troops, in the service of Cheyt Sing.

In speaking of the Begums, he copies verbatim the charges of Mr. Burke, and a part of the speech of Mr. Sheridan, though both have been fully disproved, even by evidence adduced by those gentlemen.

In detailing the history of the presents, Mr. Belsham goes as far beyond Mr. Burke in



artifice and misrepresentation, as that gentleman has gone beyond all other men who have either spoke or written upon the subject. Am I not therefore justified from the preceding instances, in repeating that Mr. Belsham has been guilty of gross and wilful misrepresentation, or that he is, from his excessive carelessness, a most wretched historian?

Does he possess "a spirit of cool and philosophical enquiry? Enlarged views, and "freedom from party spirit"? Will his history "convey a fair statement to posterity\*?"

The Editors of the New Annual Register say, "that the propriety of Mr. Belsham's "deciding *so peremptorily* on the conduct of "Mr. Hastings, while his trial was pending, "may be disputed."

I acquit Mr. Belsham of all blame upon this head. The acquisition of Bengal in 1765; the great extension of our empire in India, between that period and 1793; the interesting events which took place during the long administration of Mr. Hastings,

\* New Annual Register for 1795.

formed

formed so very material a part in the history of the present reign, that Mr. Belsham might not have thought himself at liberty to leave so material a chasm in his Memoirs. But when the importance of the subject, and the peculiar situation in which Mr. Hastings stood, are considered, the Editors must agree with me, that it was the special duty of Mr. Belsham, to be exceedingly careful in the compilation of his Memoirs. It was his duty to state every thing fairly to his readers; indeed it was doubly incumbent upon him to do so, because he has been more free in the use of epithets than any historian I have ever met with, either ancient or modern. It was still more incumbent upon Mr. Belsham to state all circumstances, when his second edition was published; at that period Mr. Hastings was acquitted. The honour of the Court then became materially interested; for no man, who now or hereafter gives credit to Mr. Belsham, can hesitate to pronounce, that the verdict was unjust. Had Mr. Belsham given a summary of *the evidence*, instead of copying the charges, and the Managers' speeches, his readers might have judged for themselves on the propriety or the injustice of  
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of the epithets, which are so profusely scattered over those parts of his Memoirs, which apply to Mr. Hastings.

Sir John Dalrymple, and the late Mr. James Macpherson, have had the boldness to represent the leading patriots of the last, and early in the present century, either as knaves or traitors. If we believe these historians, the men whom we have been accustomed to look up to with reverence, either intrigued with France, received bribes from Louis the XIVth, or plotted to dethrone the Monarch who preserved our liberties, at their particular invitation. These writers, however, acted very differently from Mr. Belsham: they published the authorities on which their opinions were founded, leaving it to their readers to give what credit they pleased to those authorities.

Not so has Mr. Belsham proceeded. No man living can dissent from his conclusions, if he gives him credit for impartiality. Yet justice to Mr. Hastings, who was acquitted, to the Lords who acquitted him, and to his country, the honour of which is deeply interested in the question, required that Mr. Belsham



sham should “ nothing extenuate, nor set  
“ down aught in malice.”

The Editors of the New Annual Register have invariably declared, that in their opinion, the war in which this country is now involved, was occasioned by the absurd and arrogant conduct of his Majesty's Ministers; yet even at this moment, when almost every man in the kingdom pants for peace, the great bulk of the people believe, that the war originated in the unprovoked aggression of France, and that the blood hounds of the Gironde, and the tigers of the Mountain, were, at the close of the year 1792, equally determined to provoke us to hostilities. What must the world have thought of the presumption of the Editors, had they acted like Mr. Belsham? They better understood their duty to the public. They published the arguments on both sides, and thereby left their readers with full liberty to draw their own conclusions, from the materials before them. If Mr. Belsham had acted in this fair and honourable manner, *his epithets* would have been as disregarded, as the orations of Mr. Burke. As he narrates events, it is not possible for those  
readers

readers who have confidence in his accuracy, to say that his epithets are misapplied.

This partiality of Mr. Belsham is the more unpardonable, because he possesses a sound judgment, and strong powers of discrimination. In his first volume he very freely exposed the dilemma in which that Parliament was involved, which censured the measures of Lord Clive, but took for the nation all that resulted from those measures, beyond a very moderate commercial dividend, which it left to the East India Company.

With much more justice might Mr. Belsham have stated the case of Mr. Hastings. The enquiry into the conduct of Lord Clive was of short duration. The hostile resolution moved against him by General Burgoyne, was, that he acquired for himself thirty thousand pounds a year, and two hundred and fifty thousand pounds in money, which ought to have been the property of the state. When it is considered that the transaction happened sixteen years before its propriety was questioned, that Lord Clive never denied it for a moment, and that when he did acquire this large property for himself, he  
conquered

conquered an empire for Great Britain, I should imagine the fame of the noble Lord will not be injured by such a charge.

In the case of Mr. Hastings, however, there is a material distinction, which could not have escaped the acute mind of Mr. Belsham, had his candour been equal to his understanding.

It is not merely that no measure adopted by Mr. Hastings has been changed, but during each year of his trial, it was the boast of the India Minister, to which the House of Commons gave a pleasing attention, that our resources in Bengal were immense, and promised to be permanent; that while the treasures of Bengal were annually poured into Great Britain, that country was in a progressive state of improvement, and the people infinitely happier than at any former period.

In his third volume, Mr. Belsham gives a character of Mr. Hastings, false in every particular, except as to political and personal courage, two very necessary qualities in a statesman. At the close of the character he says, " The truth, however, is, that this  
 " man, for thirteen years *the scourge of the*  
 " *East*, and whom *ignorance and folly* have  
 " *preposterously*



“preposterously ranked with the Sullys and Chathams of the West, has never been, and never can become the theme of *discerning* and *rational* panegyric.”

Mr. Belsham has often, in the course of his history, applied the epithets *arrogant*, and *presumptuous*, to various individuals. But the arrogance and presumption of Mr. Belsham exceeds that of any public man whatever. An historian undoubtedly is not to confine himself to a mere narration of facts: he has a right to submit his own sentiments to his readers, but it is in the highest degree arrogant, presumptuous, and unjust, in any historian, to cast a severe reflection upon a public character, until he has fairly submitted every point in his conduct, to the view of his readers.

He affirms that Mr. Hastings was for thirteen years the scourge of the East. Was it not very unfair in Mr. Belsham, not to say at the same time, that Mr. Hastings had been continued for those thirteen years in the government of Bengal by four several parliamentary appointments, and that the system which he established continues to the present moment, or where it was at all changed, as

in

in letting the lands of Bengal, it was changed at his express recommendation?

Neither Jourdan, Moreau, nor Buonaparte, will be censured for the outrages committed in Germany or in Italy, unless their acts are disavowed by the French Government. If the assertions of Mr. Belsham, relative to Mr. Hastings, were well founded, the disgrace of allowing an individual to remain as the scourge of an empire for thirteen years ought to fall upon the Legislature of Great Britain, and with double force upon the King's Ministers, who, from 1773, to the close of Mr. Hastings's government, possessed a controuling power over the East India Company, and were officially informed of every material transaction, of his long administration.

But justice to Mr. Hastings, to the King's Ministers, and to his own country, ought to have induced Mr. Belsham to lay before his readers every circumstance which might enable them to form an opinion of their own.

It was stated in Westminster Hall, by a very high and competent authority, Sir John Shore, the present Governor General of Bengal, that during the last twenty years, the

country had been in a progressive state of improvement, with respect to agriculture, population, and commerce. This period includes every year of Mr. Hastings's administration. It was further stated, by the same authority, with all the confidence, as he says, which conviction inspires, that property had been more secure, and individuals less oppressed, than under that Mahomedan government, which Mr. Belsham so ignorantly extols. When Lord Cornwallis, in a minute which Mr. Belsham has quoted, observed that one third of Bengal was a jungle in the year 1789, inhabited by wild beasts; Sir John said in answer, that if the fact were so, he was convinced that a much greater part of the country had been a jungle when the English Government commenced, since he was fully convinced, that Bengal had been in a progressive state of improvement under the British Administration. Let me ask the Editors of the New Annual Register, whether, upon every principle of honour and justice, Mr. Belsham, at the time that he represented Mr. Hastings as the scourge of India, was not bound to state the preceding evidence?

When



When Mr. Hastings succeeded to the government of Bengal in 1772, the total resources of that government scarcely exceeded three millions sterling a year. When he quitted it in 1785, they amounted to nearly five millions five hundred thousand pounds a year. The empire and the influence of Great Britain were extended from the banks of the Carumnassa to the source of the Ganges. Not only was this great acquisition of territory and revenue acquired, but when Great Britain was involved in a war, which necessarily extended to India, the efforts of our enemies to deprive us of that empire were successfully counteracted, and the restoration of the conquests we had made from France in India during the war, enabled the British Minister to procure from France the cession of two valuable islands, which she had conquered in the West Indies. The debt of Bengal, at the close of the war, did not exceed half her revenues for a single year.

While the trial of Mr. Hastings was pending, testimonials from all the principal natives in Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, Benares, Far-ruckabad, and Oude, were transmitted by  
 Lord

Lord Cornwallis to the East India Company, expressly declaring their high opinion of that gentleman, and as expressly disavowing the complaints made against him in their name, which they describe as resulting from ignorance, prejudice, and folly.

Lord Cornwallis himself confirmed the truth of these testimonials in Westminster Hall, by stating that the natives of India had a very high opinion of Mr. Hastings.

It does not follow that this mass of evidence would have weighed a feather in the scale in Mr. Belsham's opinion, against the bare assertions of Mr. Burke and Mr. Francis. As an historian, however, it was his bounden duty to insert it, before he gave it as his opinion, that for thirteen years Mr. Hastings had been "the scourge of the East."

If, as the Editors of the New Annual Register are pleased to assert, my strictures are *virulent* and *severe*, I lament that I have copied the bad example set by Mr. Belsham. I should be sorry to adopt the manners either of Mr. Belsham, or of Westminster Hall. Let it be observed, however, that Mr. Belsham has no delicacy in the choice of *his epithets*.

Not

Not to notice the indignant language which he applies to Lord North, and the Members of his Administration—to Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, where his opinion differs from their sentiments—to Mr. Burke on almost every subject but India—to those Members in both Houses who opposed the repeal of the Test Act—I would refer the Editors to the language which he personally applies to Mr. Hastings. He accuses him, in the most unqualified terms, of arrogance, haughtiness, pride, malice, revenge, injustice, oppression, cruelty, and corruption. I have endeavoured to shew that these epithets are misapplied; I have endeavoured to prove that Mr. Belsham, by artfully omitting many important facts, and by not stating a single fact fairly, fully, and truly, has grossly imposed upon his readers, and merits the reprobation of every honourable man. In performing this task, it was scarcely possible at all times to avoid running into the error which is to be found in almost every page of his history. Yet I am so well aware of the impropriety of intemperate language, even when justly provoked, that I wish to apologize to the reader

for



for every passage in the following Observations, in which I may have betrayed an improper warmth. My wish is, to correct the misrepresentations of Mr. Belsham, and not to copy the acrimony of his language.

LONDON,

November 10, 1796:

OBSERVATIONS

( 2 )

OBSERVATIONS

ON  
*Mr. BELSHAM's MEMOIRS*

OF THE REIGN OF GEO. III.

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**I**N a free country like Great Britain, it is in vain to expect an impartial history of the times in which we live. Each man has his party prejudices, and his personal attachments—Mr. Belsham, who appears to possess strong prejudices and attachments, has, however, undertaken this arduous task, and though, I believe, a great majority of his readers, will not approve of certain passages in his History of domestic transactions, his Memoirs contain many sound reflections, and much valuable information.

But in that portion of his History, and it is not an inconsiderable one, which is allotted to a detail of the transactions in India, it might have been expected that he would be free from a party bias altogether. On the contrary, there is hardly a refuted calumny which Mr. Belsham has not revived,

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and he must be admitted by every man who reads his Memoirs with attention, to be the most bigotted, or careless historian that ever existed.

I shall take the facts in the order in which he has stated them.

In his first volume, he speaks of the various transactions in the late, and early in the present reign, which led to our acquisition of empire in India ; and he mentions the brilliant exploits achieved by our countrymen, in terms that do honour both to them, and to himself.

But from the period of our acquisition of the Duannce in the year 1765, to the close of his history, a period of twenty-eight years, not a single event which has happened is fairly stated, and in many instances his accounts are absolutely fabulous.

Mr. Belsham has given us an extract \* from a very celebrated letter written by Lord Clive, to the Directors, in the year 1766, in which he tells them, that after paying every expence of the government of Bengal, a surplus will remain, amounting to one million six hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

That no surplus to one-fourth of this amount did remain, is a fact on which no difference of opinion exists ; it is determined by the evidence of

\* Vol. I. p. 188.



figures ; but the *causes* of the non-existence of the surplus are totally mistated by Mr. Belsham, so as to throw a very unmerited censure upon the two successors of Lord Clive.

Early in the year 1767, Lord Clive quitted India. He was succeeded by Mr. Verelst, to whom Mr. Cartier succeeded in 1770, and Mr. Burke did bare justice to the characters of these gentlemen, when he described them as honest and worthy men. None of Lord Clive's predictions were verified, and Mr. Belsham speaks of the disappointment in the following terms,

“ Little certainly could it have been imagined,  
 “ that in the short interval which had elapsed since  
 “ the acquisition of the Duannee, by which the  
 “ Company appeared to be elevated to the height  
 “ of prosperity, they should be reduced to a state  
 “ of embarrassment and distress verging upon ruin,  
 “ *A general however and transient view of the trans-*  
 “ *actions of the Company, commercial and political,*  
 “ *from that memorable period, is necessary to the ex-*  
 “ *planation of this paradox.*”

The *cause* lay so close to the surface, that a man of Mr. Belsham's talents and industry, might have discovered it in a moment, if his prejudices had not led him astray. The simple fact is this, that to leave a surplus of one million six hundred and fifty thousand pounds, Lord Clive calculated the revenues at half a million sterling, more than

*they could produce*, and the expences at six hundred thousand pounds *less* than their lowest possible amount.

The revenues his Lordship estimated at two hundred and fifty lacks of Sicca rupees. The civil and military expences at sixty lacks, or seven hundred thousand pounds sterling. In the same year that Lord Clive wrote his letter, the expences amounted to one million two hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds, and were increased in the following years, until in 1770, they amounted to one million seven hundred thousand pounds, owing to the increased charges of fortifications and buildings. Under the head of expence, therefore, Lord Clive's estimate was fallacious in nearly a million sterling latterly; and originally, it was fallacious to the amount of six hundred thousand pounds. The paradox would have been explained by stating these facts, and shewing at the same time, that the revenues fell half a million short of Lord Clive's estimate.

But Mr. Belsham begins by imputing the deranged state of the Company's affairs before 1772. 1st. To the monopoly of salt, beetle nut, and tobacco, formed by Lord Clive; and, 2dly, To the plan of letting the lands to the highest bidder, which his Lordship adopted.

Beetle nut and tobacco, though forming a part of the plan, never were monopolized. Salt was a monopoly,

monopoly, and it is so at this moment, with this difference, that under Lord Clive's plan, it was a monopoly for the benefit of the Company's servants, reserving an *ad valorem* duty, which produced one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year to government. Salt is now a monopoly under a plan formed by Mr. Hastings, and to which Mr. Francis gave an unwilling assent, on the express condition, that the whole responsibility of the measure should attach upon Mr. Hastings. This scheme has produced an annual revenue of one million sterling, to the Company and Mr. Hastings received the thanks of the Directors, and the Board of Controul, for having made so great an addition to the public resources. Under Lord Clive's plan, the trade of salt was a monopoly in all its branches. Under Mr. Hastings's plan, which is the present plan, the Company as *sovereigns*, manufacture the salt, sell it in the first instance at certain periods, on the spot where it is manufactured, or at Calcutta; but the trade is *free and unfettered*. In this respect, therefore, it has great advantage over the plan of Lord Clive; but however defective his Lordship's scheme might have been, it certainly produced none of those consequences attributed to it by Mr. Belsbam; for salt was retailed as low to the natives, under the government of Lord Clive, as at the present time; consequently it is not possible for any man  
of



of common information to attribute the distress which the Company suffered between 1765 and 1772, to the monopoly of salt, beetle nut, and tobacco, in 1766 and 1767.

Of the second supposed cause of the public dis-  
appointment, Mr. Belsham speak as follows.

“ Another device or project of *legal plunder*, was  
“ to declare void *at once*, to the inexpressible con-  
“ sternation of the Zemindars and Polygars, who  
“ constitute the great landed interest of the coun-  
“ try, all the leases held by them under the go-  
“ vernment, on very low and beneficial terms.”\*

Mr. Belsham has, in this passage, been guilty of errors unpardonable in an historian. The term *Polygar* was never heard of in *Bengal*. *Polygars* are armed free-booters, inhabiting the pollams, or thick woods, in the wild part of the Carnatic, and the northern Circars; they are tributary chiefs, acknowledging the Nabob, and the Company, as sovereigns, and holding under a sort of feudal tenure. But the Zemindars of Bengal never entertained the most distant idea of holding their lands under such a tenure. Certain it is, that for at least one hundred years, and probably for a much longer period, *the government* fixed the rents of the lands, and where Zemindars disliked the terms, they received pensions, under the word *moshaira*,

\* Vol. I. p. 332.

amounting to one-tenth of the rents. In the letter of Lord Clive, which Mr. Belsham quotes, he might have acquired knowledge on this subject. His Lordship tells the Directors, that the revenues in 1766 amounted to two hundred and fifty lacks of rupees, and that *hereafter* they will be twenty or thirty lacks more. If the rents had been *fixed*, no increase could have taken place, but by an act of the grossest oppression and injustice.

Mr. Belsham goes on.\* “ The pretext for this “ was, that many of these leases had been *collusively* “ *obtained*, that impartiality required that they “ should be now re-let *to the highest bidder*. By “ *this enormous act of despotism*, many individuals of “ very elevated situations in life *were entirely ru-* “ *ined*—immense fortunes were made by the fa- “ voured few, and the landed interest after all was “ acknowledged *to be very little improved*.” Where Mr. Belsham picked up this information I cannot conceive. It is absolutely *fabulous*; were it true, it would not aid Mr. Belsham, who mentions it in order to explain a *paradox*, namely, why the the Company’s affairs, apparently so flourishing in 1766, should, in 1772, have been brought to the verge of ruin.

He relates a supposed act of despotism, by which after all he says, the revenues *were very little im-*

\* Vol. I. p. 332.

*proved,*

*proved*, which at least implies that they were somewhat improved, consequently the *paradox* is still unexplained.

*No leases* were resumed. If Mr. Belsham had read the Reports of the Committee of Secrecy, or had enquired of any man who had not a malignant pleasure in misleading him, he would have known, that Mahomed Reza Cawn had the sole management of the revenues under Lord Clive, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Cartier; that he acted as *all his Mahomedan predecessors had done*. He granted *no leases*, but let the lands to the highest bidder, at an annual ceremony, called the Puneah, where the lands were let either to Zemindars or farmers, as Mahomed Reza Cawn thought proper, and most for the public interest: always to Zemindars: I believe, where the terms were equal; "the Zemindars being considered as having a sort of hereditary right, or at least *a right of preference* to lease the revenues. \*"

This subject was taken up with great attention by the Committee in 1773, who reported to the House of Commons, "that all the lands of the provinces are considered as belonging to the Crown or Sovereign of the country, who claims a right to collect rents or revenues from all the said lands, except such as are appropriated to charitable or religious purposes."

\* Fourth Report, Committee of Secrecy, pages 1, 2, and 3.



Not an idea was entertained, until Mr. Francis first invented it, that the Sovereign was not to fix the amount of the revenue. The Zemindar's proportion is reckoned at one-tenth of the rents; so that Government gets eighteen shillings in the pound, and the Zemindar two shillings. The Zemindar is also obliged to keep a regular account of every rupee he collects from the Ryots, and that account is open at all times to the inspection of government. In truth, the whole system is so totally foreign from any thing known in England, that it is difficult to make the subject quite intelligible. What we understand by the word *quit-rent* is, that a man paying that rent, is entirely at his liberty to do what he pleases; but the Zemindar of Bengal has no such privilege; he is neither a farmer, nor a country gentleman. The farmer who pays his rent enjoys the produce of his farm; the country gentleman, after paying *his land-tax*, lets his land as high as he can to a farmer: but a Bengal Zemindar, though he pays the sum demanded as a rent or land-tax by Government, which is nine-tenths of the supposed value of the estate, cannot remove his tenants, nor increase their rents, nor act in any manner independent of Government. Such *was* the constitution at least one hundred years before we acquired power in Bengal.

That the doctrine of a *quit-rent* always was un-

intelligible in Bengal, the following fact, taken from the Second Report of the Select Committee, will sufficiently prove.

The province of Burdwan was ceded to the East India Company in 1760. The Zemindar, a man of very high distinction, enjoying the title of Rajah, came to Calcutta, and offered to rent the district at eighteen lacks of rupees for the ensuing year. He depended upon our total ignorance of the real value of the district; his offers were rejected; he increased them to twenty-four, then to twenty-eight, and ultimately to thirty-two lacks, which being the best terms offered, were accepted by the Governor and Council. The province was afterwards let in farm to the highest bidder, and the rent increased to forty-four lacks, at which sum the province is now let *for ever* by Lord Cornwallis.

Suppose Mr. Belfham and Mr. Francis to be *correct*, then we have done an act of injustice to the Zemindar of Burdwan, which ought to transmit the British name with infamy to the latest posterity. If, by the usage and custom of the country, the Zemindar had a right to hold at a *quit-rent*, every rupee of advance beyond that rent is a scandalous robbery.

The truth is, that *now* a *quit-rent* is really fixed, and the faith of Government is pledged *never* to increase the land-rents of Bengal: but this was not  
done

done until *three years ago*.—Thirty years experience enabled us to discover what the rents ought to be; at that sum they were fixed; that is, at the medium rent actually collected during the administration of Mr. Hastings, which is three hundred and ten lacks of rupees. But the following Proclamation, issued by Lord Cornwallis, will sufficiently shew every dispassionate man, that the reasoning of Mr. Francis and Mr. Belfham runs counter to the knowledge of every rational man in England or in India.

“ It is *well known* to the Zemindars, independent Talookdars, and other actual proprietors of land, as well as to the inhabitants of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa in general, *that from the earliest times, until the present period*, the public assessment on the lands *has never been fixed*, but that, *according to established usage and custom*, the rulers of these provinces have, *from time to time*, demanded an increase of assessment from the proprietors of land, and that for the purpose of obtaining this increase, not only frequent investigations have been made to ascertain the actual produce of their estates, but that it has been the practice to deprive them of the management of their lands, and either to let them in farm, or to appoint officers on the part of Government, to collect the assessment immediately from the Ryots.”



In this Proclamation, Lord Cornwallis fully *confirms* the statement made by the Committee of Secrecy in 1773, and totally cuts up by the roots every thing that Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Francis and Mr. Belsham have said. From *the earliest times*, means, most undoubtedly, that from the Mahomedan conquest, Government exercised *the right* of fixing the amount of the revenues, and custom had authorized the Zemindars to expect, that where they declined to pay the sum fixed by Government as its full proportion of the produce of the lands, the collections would be entrusted to other hands. The arrangement, which has now taken place, is looked upon as *a concession* on the part of Government, and accepted by the Zemindars *as an indulgence*.

Of the *effects* supposed to be produced by the monopoly of salt, and letting the lands to the highest bidder, Mr. Belsham speaks in the following terms:

“ The natives, reduced to poverty and almost  
 “ despair *by perpetual exactions*, could no longer  
 “ purchase their favourite articles at the extrava-  
 “ gant prices demanded by the monopolists. Those  
 “ that cultivated the soil, planted in doubt, and  
 “ reaped in uncertainty. *A large proportion of land*  
 “ *was left untilled, and a general scarcity of provi-*  
 “ *sions, particularly of rice, the great staple of In-*  
 “ *dian sustenance, unavoidably ensued.* It was pos-  
 “ fible

“ fible to exist without beetle-nut and tobacco,  
 “ but not without their daily food. *The commer-*  
 “ *cial monopolists seized with avidity the opportunity of*  
 “ *collecting rice into stores.* As the Gentoos would  
 “ in no extremity violate the precepts of their re-  
 “ ligion by eating flesh, they had no other alter-  
 “ native than to part with the remains of their  
 “ property, or die with hunger.

“ The people being in a short time reduced to  
 “ a wretched subsistence on unwholesome and un-  
 “ accustomed roots, a dreadful sickness and mor-  
 “ tality ensued. In some districts the living  
 “ scarcely sufficed to bury the dead, and pesti-  
 “ lence and famine in horrid combination deso-  
 “ lated the land.”\*

No miserable party scribbler has gone greater lengths in defamation, than Mr. Belsham. I do not impute to him the *invention* of this foul calumny, because I think it extremely probable that at the time party prejudices ran so high against Lord Clive, some abandoned individual might have written a passage similar to the preceding. But surely it is the province of an historian calmly to collect his facts—to weigh them maturely, and to destroy, not to perpetuate falsehood.

Mr. Belsham affirms, that the famine of 1770 originated from the monopoly of salt, beetle-nut,

\* Vol. I. page 332.

and tobacco, and letting the lands to the highest bidder; which reduced the natives to despair, rendered property insecure, and caused them to leave a considerable part of the land untilled.

If there is, however, an historical fact better authenticated than another, it is this: that the famine, which raged so fatally in Bengal in 1770, was solely owing to the failure of the periodical rains in the autumn of 1769. Even Nundcomar, who secretly transmitted a charge connected with the subject, to the Court of Directors, was not so abandoned as to impute to the crimes or false policy of individuals, a calamity which the will of Heaven had inflicted. He accused Mahomed Reza Cawn of turning an unavoidable calamity to to his private advantage, by monopolizing rice in the early stage of the famine; but wicked and unprincipled as Nundcomar was, even he did not venture to charge *an Englishman* with so foul a deed. From Mr. Cartier, the Governor, to the youngest Writer, and from the Commander in Chief to the junior Cadet, every effort was used to relieve the distresses which Providence had ordained. The anxiety, which in this hour of scarcity is displayed by all ranks of people, to relieve the miseries of the poor, was shewn at least in an equal degree in Bengal in the year 1770.

Mr. Belfham acts quite in character, by closing his *fictional account* of Bengal with a quotation from  
that



that novellist, the Abbé Raynal, who knew as much of Bengal, as I do of Lapland.

It only requires a man to exercise *his reason*, and then he will know, that an army, consisting of a battalion of artillery, six British and twenty-eight native battalions, with the contingencies attendant upon such an army—the completion of so great a fortress as Fort William—the erection of cantonments—the whole expence of the civil government in all its branches—could not *possibly* have been maintained for the sum of sixty lacks of rupees, 700,000l. How Lord Clive could have made such an estimate, or how the Directors could have given credit to it, has always been to me a matter of surprise and astonishment. It only shews how the wisest men may impose upon themselves, or may be imposed upon, where their passions, or their interests, are concerned; but it was Mr. Belsham's duty to investigate this subject with attention, as he undertook to explain *the paradox*.

Of the History of the Parliamentary Enquiry into the Conduct of Lord Clive, I shall say but little, because Mr. Belsham has laid both the *accusation* and the *defence* fairly before his readers; and every gentleman can form his own conclusions. I wish I could with justice compliment Mr. Belsham on his impartiality *in any other instance*. But on the memory of Lord Clive he has cast an unmerited reflection, by stating that his death was probably  
occasioned

occasioned by remorse. In India his memory is *revered*; he had no enemies, but those which a man in such a situation must, in the course of things, have created: the death of Lord Clive may fairly be said to have originated from accident; a kick in the face from a very vicious horse, when a young man, beat out several of his teeth, injured others, and affected him so much, that to alleviate a pain, which never completely left him, he had recourse to opium, which, by the advice of a physician, he discontinued in England. A fatal depression of spirits was the consequence. Lord Loughborough, who ably defended Lord Clive, and knew him well, can vouch for the truth of this anecdote.

In his third volume, Mr. Belsham resumes his History of India, and it occupies one hundred and forty-five successive pages. It commences with the first acts of the administration of Mr. Hastings, and closes with the last measure of his government, including a period of thirteen years.

It is exceedingly material for those who wish to form a *true judgment* of Mr. Belsham's candour or justice to recollect, that in *his first volume* he has *expressly* told us, that by the measures adopted, *previous to Mr. Hastings's arrival in Bengal*, the natives had been reduced\* *to the lowest state of misery*

\* Vol. I. page 355.

*and wretchedness—Famine and pestilence in horrid combination had desolated the land.* The security of property was *no more*, and the *income* and the *expenditure* barely balanced each other. Such is the account given by Mr. Belfham. Mr. Hastings, therefore, might have made a change *for the better*. He *could not* make matters worse.

Mr. Hastings's character stood *confessedly unimpeached*, says Mr. Belfham; his appointment, he attributes to the prevalence of the Sullivan party over Lord Clive. The truth, however, is, that his Lordship most cordially approved of the appointment, that he had the highest opinion of Mr. Hastings, and had employed him in the important post of Minister at the Court of Meer Jaffier. Lord North affirmed, in the House of Commons, that he should propose Mr. Hastings to be Governor General of Bengal, because, in very high and beneficial situations, he had resisted those temptations which Lord Clive had declared to be irresistible.

The points in the conduct of Mr. Hastings, which Mr. Belfham most severely censures, and which all his readers must censure as strongly too, if they depend upon Mr. Belfham for accuracy, or impartiality in the selection of his materials, are,

The management of the public revenues of Bengal.



The Rohilla war.

The sale of Corah and Allahabad.

The stoppage of the Mogul's tribute.

The receipt of presents.

His conduct to Nundcomar and Mahomed Reza Cawn.

The Mahratta war.

The expulsion of Cheyt Sing.

The Begums, Oude, and other matters of little moment.

I shall state a *few facts* upon each, and I shall quote *my authorities* as I go along. \* Under the first head Mr. Belsham affirms, that "the project so "*universally and justly execrated in England*, of setting up the lands of Zemindars, *Polygars*, &c. "to public auction, appeared to be the favourite "and deliberate plan of Mr. Hastings himself."

In the first volume, Mr. Belsham expressly says, that the leases of the Zemindars were all resumed, and the lands let to the highest bidder, between 1766 and 1770. He calls this a project of legal plunder—an enormous act of despotism; and he supposes the famine to have originated in that measure.

But *now* he appears to agree *with Mr. Francis, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox*, who never did scruple to affirm, that Mr. Hastings was the *first man*, who let the lands of Bengal to the highest bidder. The

\* Vol. III. p. 48.

historian and the orators are equally to be condemned for ignorance, or misrepresentation. The plain fact may be very shortly told.

The Court of Directors, finding that none of Lord Clive's promises had been performed, paid attention to the information, transmitted to them by Nundcomar and others, and did really believe, that many millions of their property had been embezzled by collusive agreements, between Mahomed Reza Cawn and the Zemindars and Farmers of Bengal.

Acting under this impression, they totally abolished the system formed by Lord Clive; the fundamental principle of which was, that the natives should have the entire management and controul of the revenues. They dismissed Mahomed Reza Cawn, and they directed Mr. Hastings and his Council openly to assume the management of their revenues, and of every branch of the government. They remarked that Burdwan, under the system of letting the lands in farm to the highest bidder, eminently flourished, and they recommended the same system to be adopted throughout Bengal.

Under these orders, the lands were let on leases for five years. Mr. Belsham, from ignorance I presume, adopts a fallacy stated by Mr. Francis, which Mr. Pitt exposed in the House of Commons. He says, that in these five years the rents fell two millions and a half short of the settlement.

But if he knew any thing of the subject on which he writes, it would not be necessary to tell him, that balances and remissions to the same amount at least, happened in the preceding five years; and that the true way of coming to a just conclusion would be to compare the nett receipts of those five years with those of any similar period, prior or subsequent to that settlement. He also copies the remark of Mr. Francis, on the farms held by Cauntoo Baboo, the Banyan of Mr. Hastings, and his investment contract, omitting to state Mr. Pitt's refutation of the charge, who proved that he was a very considerable farmer, and a large contractor for the investment, *long before Mr. Hastings came to Bengal*. But if proof were wanting of the gross folly and absurdity of these accusations against Mr. Hastings, it would be only necessary to remark, that, although Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke had *invariably* declared, that of all the criminal acts imputed to Mr. Hastings, that of letting the lands to the highest bidder was the *most criminal by far*, they never offered one tittle of evidence upon it, in Westminster Hall.

In the fourth volume\*, Mr. Belsham says, that Mr. Francis closed his speech on the revenues as follows: "When Mr. Hastings came into possession of the Bengal government, he found it a

\* Page 144.

"rich,



“ *rich, populous, and prosperous country. It con-*  
 “ *tained a regular gradation of ranks, like a pyra-*  
 “ *mid, from a well-ordered yeomanry to sovereign*  
 “ *princes. But these distinctions have been broken*  
 “ *down. The whole nation has been pounded*  
 “ *down, as it were, by the oppression of Govern-*  
 “ *ment, into one mass, and the prince was no*  
 “ *otherwise discoverable from the peasant, than by*  
 “ *the superiority of his feelings, and the more poi-*  
 “ *gnant bitterness of his sufferings.*”

If Mr. Belsham had followed the insertion of this speech, by a declaration that it was *totally false*, he would at least have preserved *his own consistency*; for Mr. Belsham had said, that Bengal was *ruined*, the security of property *destroyed*, and that famine and pestilence *had desolated the land* in 1770. Mr. Belsham leaves his readers to discover these contradictions, and says this revenue charge passed, “ *notwithstanding the unexpected dissent of the Minister.*”

Could any *Minister* so far violate every regard to *truth, reason, and common sense*, as to assent, by his vote, to all that mass of folly and absurdity which is to be found in the printed speeches of Mr. Francis, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, on the subject of the revenues of Bengal?

On the *material point*, Mr. Pitt precisely said, *what Mr. Belsham has said*, that the lands were let to the *highest bidder long before Mr. Hastings returned to Bengal*, consequently it was folly, and he might have

have added, falsehood, to impute the invention of the plan to him. He utterly denied the position of Mr. Francis, that the Zemindars had a *right* to hold their lands *at a quit-rent*; and he positively affirmed, that as Bengal had been in a progressive state of improvement under Mr. Hastings's administration, there was not a shadow of ground on which to rest a criminal accusation. The party, however, for it was before Mr. Burke had thrown the torch of discord amongst them, supported Mr. Francis, of whom they had a high opinion, and Mr. Pitt was left in a minority.

Mr. Belfham has given a long extract from a letter written by Mr. Francis to Lord North, in the year 1777, in which there is the following *most singular sentence*\*: "The easiest, the most simple, and the least invidious principle on which this country could be held, would be, that of a *fixed tribute* from the native prince of the country, avoiding all interference with the internal government."

I was so struck by the absurdity and folly of this opinion, that I could not bring myself to believe it *possible* for Mr. Francis to have transmitted it to the Minister of Great Breat Britain. Upon referring to his letter, I find the passage runs thus: "*If measures already taken, and the effects they have produced, had no influence on those which must*

\* Vol. III. page 98.

“ be pursued hereafter, the safest, the most simple,  
 “ and the least invidious principle on which this  
 “ territory could be held, would have been, that of  
 “ a fixed tribute from the native prince of the  
 “ country, avoiding all interference with the in-  
 “ ternal government, an armed force to ensure  
 “ *his dependance*, and some strong post for security  
 “ or retreat.”

Mr. Francis does not therefore recommend, as any one reading the extract as Mr. Belfham gives it would think he did, that we should *now* adopt such a system; but the passage, even as Mr. Francis penned, is a severe censure upon Lord Clive, and a most unmerited one. This *safe*, simple, and least invidious principle had been tried, and *did actually exist when Lord Clive returned to Bengal in 1765*; but he had sense enough to see that it could not hold.—A sovereign of a very extensive kingdom, holding absolute power over ten millions of people, and *dependent* upon the East India Company! what an order of things! Lord Clive saw, and told the Company, that to preserve *a medium* was *impossible*. \* He therefore wisely assumed the whole government, *unwisely* perhaps he determined to execute it, through the agency of a native Minister. As men will be men, at all times, and in

\* Letter to the Directors, July 1766.



all situations, Lord North could not have had a very high opinion of the gentleman whom Mr. Belsham denominates "a sagacious counsellor," for sending him such a letter.

As soon as Lord Clive had elevated Meer Jaffer to the rank and importance of a monarch, he intrigued against us, and applied to the Dutch, to assist in our expulsion. Meer Cossim found our consequence a burthen too heavy for him to bear. Even Cheyt Sing, placed as he was so near to independence, panted for an opportunity to become completely independent.

In the fourth volume, \* Mr. Belsham says, "One of the *primary*, and most important measures of the new Governor General (Lord Cornwallis) was, to *lease* the lands in perpetuity, *at an equitable valuation*, on which momentous transaction his Lordship thus expresses himself to the Directors."—"The security of property, and the certainty which each individual will now feel, of being allowed to enjoy the fruits of his labours, must operate uniformly, as incitements to labour and industry."—"This could not but be considered as a bitter satire on the conduct of his predecessor, and as amounting to a very explicit acknowledgment of the misery and oppression which the inhabitants had long

\* Page 291.

"suffered

“ suffered under his capricious, haughty, and tyrannical administration.”

The malignity of Mr. Belsham so far gets the better of his judgment, *and of his memory*, that it leads him into inconsistencies highly disgraceful to an historian. Mr. Hastings did not establish *that system* which *ruined* Bengal, if it were to be admitted that Bengal *was ruined*. Mr. Belsham himself allows that the ruin was *completed*, and the security of property *no more*, long before Mr. Hastings came to Bengal ; now he is disposed to give a credit to Lord Cornwallis, which his Lordship *never assumed*. He arrived in Bengal in September 1786 ; he received orders from home, to let the lands for ten years at the medium rents of the ten preceding years, and to declare, that at the end of ten years, if the rents were regularly paid, the settlement should be *perpetual*. His Lordship concluded the ten years settlement in 1790, that is, *four years* after he had been in Bengal ; for with all the advantages of station and local residence, Lord Cornwallis did not acquire knowledge quite so quick as Mr. Belsham and Mr. Francis. He recommended to the Directors, that the settlement of ten years should be declared *perpetual*, and these orders were sent to India in 1792 ; so that Lord Cornwallis had been *six years* in Bengal, before the settlement in *perpetuity* did take place : it was made for three hundred and ten lacks of rupees a

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year.

year. That was the average sum collected under the administration of Mr. Hastings; so that what Mr. Belfham now calls *an equitable valuation*, was the *precise sum* which it was very *oppressive* to the people to pay, *under the capricious, haughty, and tyrannical administration of Mr. Hastings.*

In another part of his history, Mr. Belfham accuses Mr. Hastings of inconsistency, for having made *short settlements*, though that gentleman had declared that short settlements were highly mischievous. Before Mr. Belfham had presumed to censure a man so freely, who once filled a high and important situation, he should have inquired *into the truth of his assertions.* The Directors, in the letter of 1786, which gave to Lord Cornwallis *the power* to make a ten years settlement, say, that they do not blame Mr. Hastings for having made *short settlements*, since he had very *wisely* and *properly* told them *his opinion* of the *impolicy* of short settlements, but that they had withheld *from him* the power to extend them. In fact, Mr. Hastings had strongly urged the propriety of making the settlements for the lives of the Zemindars, at a fixed rent, or to farmers where Zemindars were incapable; the Directors *adopted* and *extended* his principle. Prior to the arrival of Mr. Hastings in Bengal, they were always *annual settlements*; and so they are now in every other part of India, under the Mahomedan princes.

In



In his third volume,\* Mr. Belsham very severely censures a plan formed by Mr. Hastings in 1781, for collecting the revenues of Bengal.

“ All the evils,” says Mr. Belsham, “ *so clearly foreseen, and so little regarded, by Mr. Hastings, added to those arising from the grossest corruption and speculation, took place under this system, the chief administrator of which was one Gunga Govind Sing, a wretch loaded, as Mr. Hastings himself acknowledged, with reproaches, and of whom it stands upon record, that there was scarcely a family of rank in the three provinces, whom he had not, some time or other, distressed and afflicted, scarce a Zemindary that he had not dismembered and plundered.*”

Mr. Belsham, in his history, complains, and with reason, of the abusive language uttered against the Dissenters. That every Presbyterian is in his heart a Republican, many an over zealous Churchman, and many a high flying Tory, has declared; candid and honourable men regret so indiscriminate and ill-founded a reflection. Mr. Belsham, who can so poignantly feel the want of candour in others, is most inexcusable if he is equally uncandid in his reflections on those, on whose character and conduct he takes upon him to pass judgment. On the subject of India, he is as furious a bigot as any one of the men he condemns. The preceding

\* Page 117.

passage is not merely void of candour, it *has not the shadow of truth* for its support in any part of it.

The plan of 1781 produced, *in three years*,\* a nett increase of revenue of three hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds, as appeared by a comparison with the nett receipts *of the three preceding years*.† This was a very important *addition* to our resources, during an expensive and extensive war, when no assistance was afforded by Great Britain to India; and when Mr. Hastings was told, that he must contrive to meet all the exigencies of India, from the resources of the Bengal government. That “the “grossest peculation and corruption were practised “under this system,” is a *foul calumny*, first uttered by Mr. Burke, repeated by Mr. Belsham with a close fervility, but neither the one nor the other have attempted to *prove* it; consequently I am warranted in pronouncing it a *foul calumny*.

On the subject of Gunga Govind Sing, mark how a *plain tale* shall expose Mr. Belsham.

In the year 1775, Mr. Francis moved in Council, that Gunga Govind Sing should be dismissed from his office; his own confession having, in the opinion of Mr. Francis, convicted him of a specific offence, and his character being, as Mr. Francis said, he was well informed, infamous in an uncommon degree. Mr. Barwell said, that during *his*

\* Minutes of Evidence, page 1186.

† Ditto, page 1189.

*long residence in the country, it was the first time he had heard that the man's character was infamous. No information he had ever received, though he had heard many people speak ill of him, pointed to any particular act of infamy committed by him. Mr. Hastings says, "I have very good reason to believe that Gunga Govind Sing by no means merits the character which has been reported of him, to Mr. Francis. He had many enemies when he was proposed to be employed in the Company's service, and not one advocate among the natives, who had immediate access to myself. I think, therefore, if his character had been such as described, the knowledge of it could hardly have failed to have been ascertained to me by specific facts. I have heard him loaded, as I have heard many others, with general reproaches, but have never heard any one express a doubt of his abilities."*

Mr. Anstruther, a Manager, put the following question to Mr. Anderson, then a witness at the Bar in Westminster Hall:\*

*"Whether this character of Gunga Govind Sing be a true one or not; that at the time he was proposed to be employed in the Company's service, he had many enemies, and not one advocate amongst the natives?"*

A. "I do not think it is."

On Lord Thurlow's expressing *his surprize at the*

\* Page 1289.

question,



question, Mr. Anstruther replied, " My Lord, they " are Mr. Hastings's *own words*"—a species of wit excusable in a Manager who was not apt to be very witty. But from an historian we expect a cool detail of facts. We expect, that when he relates *the truth*, he shall state *the whole truth*.

The preceding extract will shew that both Mr. Belfham and Mr. Anstruther have wilfully or carelessly mistated what really passed: that in fact, all that Mr. Hastings says, is this: I do not believe the character which Mr. Francis has heard of Gunga Govind Sing is a true one, because if it was, I must have heard it, since he had many enemies, and not one advocate, *amongst those immediately about my person*. I have, it is true, heard him, as I have heard *many others*, loaded with general reproaches; but if any *specific fact* could have been brought against him, I must have heard it. Mr. Hastings, by the expression " my person," alluded to the natural jealousy which his employment of Gunga Govind Sing had excited among his own personal dependants, who would not have failed to inform him of any real enormity committed by Gunga Govind Sing, had they known of any.

The inference generally resulting from the term *record* is this: that a fact standing upon *record* is *admitted*, or *proved* to be *true*.

The *record*, to which Belfham alludes, is the assertion of an individual at the Bar of the House  
of

of Commons (Mr. Peter Moore), and that assertion *unsupported by a single fact*. It is neither more nor less than a declaration, that *in Mr. Peter Moore's opinion*, Gunga Govind Sing had done *all* that Mr. Belfham says he did do, and that he had acquired four millions sterling. Mr. Anderson, on the other side, says, that he does not think the character of Gunga Govind Sing was a bad one: on the contrary, that he *generally* had a *good character*, though *party men* might be found who would give him a *bad character*. Sir John Shore thinks he did what every other native would have done in his situation. He says, that the man who was appointed by Mr. Francis to succeed him was *so bad a character*, that he would not permit him to visit him. In fact, Gunga Govind, like Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, had political friends and political enemies; but it would require a credulity which the man only possesses, who can affirm, that the Alcoran was written by a pen plucked from the wing of the angel Gabriel, to believe that Gunga Govind Sing could have remained an unemployed, unprotected individual, for twelve years, under the successive administrations of Sir John Macpherson, Lord Cornwallis, and Sir John Shore, if it were true, “ that there was scarcely a family of rank in “ the three provinces, whom he had not, some time “ or other, distressed or afflicted; scarcely a Ze-  
“ mindary

“ mindary that he had not dismembered and plundered.”

Would an historian deserve any credit, who was to call Mr. Pitt *a wretch*, and to say that he was the most detestable of all public characters; that not all the acts and monuments in the heroic times of Roman iniquity, the consolidated corruption of ages, could equal the gigantic corruption of a single act done by him; that such was its complicated atrocity, it delivered over to imprisonment, tortures, and even death itself, those unhappy and deluded people who had placed their dependence on British faith?\*

Were an historian to give such a character of Mr. Pitt, could he justify himself in saying, that such was his character upon *record*, and that *the record* could not be disputed, because it was taken from a speech printed by Mr. Burke, ten years before he condescended to receive a pension?

But even *such an* historian would plead in his justification what *Mr. Belsham* cannot plead. Mr. Burke gave *the fact*, namely, the arrangement for paying the debts of the Nabob of Arcot, and the Raja of Tanjore; and all that could be said is, that the *conclusion* did not follow *the premises*. Mr. Belsham gives *no fact*: he pronounces *positively*, from an opinion delivered by an individual, and

\* Mr. Burke's Speech, Feb. 24th, 1785.

contradicted



contradicted by the opinion of another individual, as honourable, and as much entitled to credit, as Mr. Peter Moore.

In his third volume, Mr. Belsham affirms,\*  
 “ that in the space of about two hundred years,  
 “ during which the kingdom of Bengal, and its  
 “ appendages, had been under the Mahomedan  
 “ government, the original ground rents, *Aussel*  
 “ *Jumma*, of the *Zemindars*, and other great here-  
 “ ditary land-holders, who held under the govern-  
 “ ment, *had never been raised.*” In a note, he says,  
 “ that the *first innovation* took place after the eleva-  
 “ tion of *Jaffier Aly Cawn*, in 1757; who, to raise  
 “ the sum stipulated as a reward for the authors of  
 “ the Revolution of 1757, departed wholly from  
 “ the fundamental constitutions of *Acbar*, multi-  
 “ plied exactions, and introduced that system of  
 “ oppression, which, under the subsequent govern-  
 “ ment of the English, produced *universal conser-*  
 “ *nation, calamity, and ruin.*” and again he says,  
 “ From the *fatal period* that Bengal fell into the  
 “ hands of the English, *the security of property was*  
 “ *no more.*”

This also is a gross, and a most unpardonable misrepresentation, which can have no other effect than to render the British name and character odious and detestable throughout the world. Mr. Francis, who drew out the revenue article, affirms

\* Page 161.

in it, that the amount of the revenues were not *materially* altered from the time of Acbar, until the year 1740; that is, *seventeen years* prior to the period when Mr. Belsham supposes the innovation to have commenced, and seventeen years before we possessed a shadow of power in Bengal. This statement of Mr. Francis therefore *totally exculpates the English*: but Lord Cornwallis affirms, that *from the earliest times*, the public assessment *had never been fixed*; and if Mr. Belsham had ever looked into a Bengal account, he would have known that, between 1557 and 1740, a variety of new taxes on the lands, under the name of *Aboabs*, had been imposed, one under the name of Munfoor Gunge Aboab—another, Chout Maratta Aboab, and many others. These were all consolidated, in order to simplify the collections, by Mr. Hastings, in 1772; and the *equitable valuation* at which the lands are now let *for ever*, is not at the *Aussel Jumma*, as settled by Acbar, but at the medium sum collected under the administration of Mr. Hastings. If Mr. Belsham *supposes* that Government has pledged itself never to demand more from Bengal, than three hundred and ten lacks of rupees a year, he is grossly mistaken. The right is expressly reserved, of imposing taxes to any amount, on articles of commerce and consumption, and some have actually been imposed since the perpetual settlement took place.

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In his first volume, Mr. Belsham says, " In fact, " a territorial revenue, in *any mode*, or under *any* " *pretence*, extorted from India, by *England*, is, in " the view of Eternal Justice, *an accursed thing*, and " the immutable laws of morality will not bend to " the haughty boasts of parliamentary omni-  
" tence."

It may be so. But unless Mr. Belsham can alter the nature of things, as they existed from the creation of the world to this time, and as they will exist until the world shall be no more, every kingdom holding foreign dependencies, will naturally draw all the advantages they can from those dependencies. The Emperor Aebur, after defraying the expences of his government in Bengal, ordered all the surplus revenues to be remitted to the royal treasury at Dehly, and so did every succeeding Emperor, until their power was totally destroyed: *that was an accursed thing*. The Sovereigns of Austria drew into Germany the surplus revenues of the Low Countries, until France lately wrested the Netherlands from them: *that was an accursed thing*. France does the same now, and will continue so to do, if on the restoration of peace she retains those countries: *that will be an accursed thing also*.

Great Britain has expended upon the West Indies more money, according to Doctor Priestley,



than would make a garden of every uncultivated acre in England: that was not only an accursed, but a very unfortunate thing also. We threw away one hundred millions on the American war; but the object was to draw a revenue and wealth to Great Britain. True it is, we were disappointed; yet we acted upon the principle that every nation ever has acted, and ever will act. In our concerns with Bengal, however, it has happened, notwithstanding all that has been said by Mr. Burke, and written by Mr. Belsham, that an immense revenue has been drawn from that country into this. Prior to 1757, Great Britain sent, in specie, six hundred thousand pounds a year on an average to Bengal and Madras, for the purchase of calicoes, silk, and muslins. From 1757, we have not remitted a dollar, except a remittance of 700,000*l.* to Lord Cornwallis, during the war with Tippoo Sultaun, but have received an investment of more than a million sterling a year. What difference, I ask Mr. Belsham, does it make to the industrious and happy people of Bengal, whether the produce *of their superfluous labour* is remitted in muslins, raw silks, indigo, sugar, &c. to England as it now is, or whether the silver formerly remitted by every maritime power in Europe, to purchase those articles, was sent to Dehly, from whence it never returned, to feed and pamper a luxurious emperor  
and

and his greedy courtiers, or exported by the stipendiary leaders of foreign troops\*. Not the least. The natives of Bengal were a conquered people more than two hundred years ago. Until 1757, the excess of revenue beyond expenditure went to Dehly, now it comes to Great Britain. They have happily exchanged Mahomedan tyrants for lenient English rulers. If the consequence of our quitting Bengal would be, that the native Hindoo Princes (if any of that race remain) were to reassume the government, there might be some sense in Mr. Belsham's argument; but we know that, though the Mussulmen do not bear the proportion

\* The army, in the old Government, consisted principally, and almost wholly, of bodies of men, foot and horse, who were conducted by Chiefs called Jemadars and Rissaldars, to whom alone they paid submission, and from whom they received their pay. The Nabob agreed with these Chiefs for their pay, and that of their followers, in the lump; and as this was never regularly paid, it was the custom to grant them assignments called Tuncaws, upon the revenues; and when they were not employed, to quarter them upon the lands on which their assignments were granted. Thus like locusts they laid waste the country at home, and engrossed a great portion of its wealth, of which they constantly sent all that they could spare from the demands of their followers, whom they always kept in arrears, to their own families in Indostan; for none were natives of Bengal, or Bahar. This was one of the greatest drains of the specie of Bengal, and one of the impediments to its re-production. Both these evils were removed by the different customs introduced by the British Government, which succeeded that of the Mogul Administration.

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of two in ten, to the Hindoos in Bengal, the effect of an expulsion would be, their restoration to power : the change would be a most serious grievance to the country.\*

In justice to Mr. Belsham, I shall notice the difference between a passage in his first and his second edition.

In the first he had said, that letting the lands of

\* I have too high a reverence for my religion to mix any arguments drawn from it, with allusions to examples formed on political morality, and have therefore chosen to give the following observation in the detached form of a note.—If precedents will not justify, neither doth religion condemn the practice. When the Pharisees produced a penny (the rate of the Roman tax) to our Blessed Saviour, and asked him whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, they probably said in their hearts, (for the text justifies the supposition) that “ a territorial revenue in any mode, or under any pretence, extorted from Judæa by Rome, is, in the view of Eternal Justice, *an accursed thing*.” But did that Divine Person ratify so harsh a sentence ? No : in express terms he confirmed the right, and enjoined their submission to it. I do not believe that Mr. Belsham, heated as he may be by his political prejudices in other instances, would, with such an example before him, repeat what he has said in this ; and I hope that as a Christian, he will hereafter forbear to assume the judgment of the Almighty, and declare that to be “ an accursed thing,” which his word has declared to be lawful. An accursed thing ! Who is Mr. Belsham, that he should denounce *ex cathedra* such a sentence, on any act not expressly, and in terms declared by our sacred canons themselves to merit it from the Almighty justice.

Bengal



Bengal to the highest bidder, "*appeared to be the favourite and deliberate plan of Mr. Hastings himself.*"

In his second edition, he says, "It appeared "from the immediate and unqualified adoption of "this odious system, *by the new Governor, to be "the favourite policy of Mr. Hastings himself.*"— So far he has abandoned his great authorities, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Francis, who have *invariably* supposed Mr. Hastings to be the inventor of the plan.

After all, *it was not the plan of Mr. Hastings, but of the Court of Directors*; and a wise and sensible plan for them to recommend. They had seen in their provinces of Burdwan, that by not accepting the first offer of the Zemindar, they had received thirty-two, instead of eighteen, lacks of rupees for one year. They had seen, that by putting the Burdwan lands to auction, and letting them to the highest bidder, the revenues of that province had increased from thirty-two to more than forty lacks a year, between 1761 and 1771; and Colonel Dow, a man as prejudiced as Mr. Belsham, had expressly told them, in a publication in which he has endeavoured to throw every odium in his power upon the governments of Lord Clive, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Cartier, that Burdwan was a garden compared to any other province in Bengal. They had been told by Mr. Holwell, that  
the

the revenues of Bengal ought to be ten millions sterling a year. Mr. Verelst had earnestly recommended to them, to let all the lands in Bengal, as those in Burdwan were let ; and Nundcomar had informed them, that they had lost many millions by collusive practices, between Mahomed Reza Cawn, and the Zemindars of Bengal.

*At that time*, no man in England, or in India, had conceived the idea, that the Zemindars had a right to hold their lands on very low and beneficial terms, by a sort of *quit-rent*.—If that doctrine be true, Lord Cornwallis, the Board of Controul, and the Directors, have acted with the grossest injustice : for the lands are now let *for ever*, not at what the Zemindars think *an equitable valuation*, but at the rent which Lord Cornwallis conceived to be the real value of the land. The Zemindars were left with no other option, than to accept or refuse the terms : some did refuse, and farmers took possession. The Zemindar of Burdwan thought the terms too high, though he has since acceded—by this settlement *for ever*, Lord Cornwallis never pretended that he reverted to *old principles* ; on the contrary, he affirmed, that he had given *a new constitution to Bengal*.

In his fourth volume, Mr. Belsham, in speaking of Mr. Pitt's bill and Mr. Fox's, says, " As to the " Zemindars, or great hereditary land-holders of " India, who had been *violently dispossessed* of their  
" property,

“ property, and who, agreeably to the generous  
 “ and decisive tenor of Mr. Fox’s bill, were to  
 “ have been *universally and peremptorily reinstated in*  
 “ *their Zemindaries*, the present bill (Mr. Pitt’s)  
 “ provided only that *an enquiry* should be insti-  
 “ tuted, in order to restore such as should appear  
 “ to have been irregularly and unjustly deprived.”

Here Mr. Belsham is mistaken *in his fact*. Mr. Fox brought in *two India bills*. The bill which did pass contained *no clause*, similar to that which Mr. Belsham mentions. The second bill did contain such a clause, but that bill *never went to a Committee*—it was drawn up either by an idiot in the affairs of India, *or by a madman*: I much doubt whether Mr. Fox *ever read it*—it was not *possible* that he should have voted for such a farrago of *folly and absurdity*. Mr. Burke was the supposed author of it—whether he drew it, or who drew it, I know not; but for the honour of Parliament, I can acquaint Mr. Belsham, *that it never was debated*. One clause directed the instant abolition of the monopolies of salt and opium. This would have been a loss of one million three hundred thousand pounds a year, and not the least benefit to the natives of Bengal. By another, *all Zemindars* were to hold *their own Zemindaries*, whether *women* or *children*, or *insane persons*, and of each description there are many in Bengal: but what rent they were to pay, Mr. Belsham cannot tell, because the



blank was never filled up. If at the rate of the *Aussel Jumma*, fixed by Acbar, it would have diminished the public revenue more than a million sterling a year, will any man, who can exercise his reason, compare this bill, the production of folly, passion, and prejudice, with that clause in Mr. Pitt's bill, which asserts that complaints have prevailed, that divers Rajahs, Zemindars, &c. have been unjustly dispossessed, which directs an enquiry into the justice of those complaints, and which peremptorily orders, that if those complaints are well founded, justice shall be done? The clause has been obeyed—enquiries *were made*—the government of Bengal was directed to investigate all complaints, and to define accurately the real rights of Zemindars.—Does Mr. Belsham know what has been the result of such an enquiry? It is this;—that the people of England had been most grossly imposed upon and deluded. A very material difference of opinion subsisted between some of the best informed persons in Bengal, as to the rights of Zemindars; but for any purpose to Mr. Belsham's argument, it was a distinction without a difference. Some contended that Zemindars were mere officers of government, who had an hereditary right to collect the revenues for government; others contended, that they had an hereditary property in the soil; and others that they held their zemindaries by special appointment, though it was usually conferred on the person  
standing

standing next in hereditary succession. But all agreed that government had an *incontestible right* to fix the amount of the public revenue from land, and to place the collections in the hands of farmers, if Zemindars would not give the rent which government thought proper to demand.—Not a single Zemindar was restored, because not a single Zemindar had been unjustly dispossessed; and Lord Thurlow, speaking upon this subject, on summing up the evidence on the trial of Mr. Hastings, lamented it as a most serious misfortune, that *the fact* of the injustice done to Zemindars in Bengal appeared at one time so clear, as to supersede the necessity of proof, but the enquiries which had taken place, and the strong circumstance, that not one Zemindar had been restored, though the law so expressly enjoined that all should be restored, who had been unjustly deprived of their lands, was to him complete proof, that Parliament had been imposed upon and deceived.

There is no fact which has been so much and so invidiously misrepresented, as that of the past and present state of Bengal. It has been stated, with a view of throwing discredit upon the British government, that between the year 1726, when Sujah Cawn was the Nabob of Bengal, and the present time, we have nearly *doubled* the landed revenues. Unquestionably this would have been an act of grinding oppression and injustice, provided the

Zemindars were entitled to hold their lands at a quit-rent fixed in 1570 ; but if, on the contrary, our government, as Lord Cornwallis declares is the case, have a right to assess the amount of the rents, then the assessment is *light* and *trivial* now in comparison with what it was in 1726 : for though it be true, that the rents are double *now*, provisions were *cheaper then*—that is, in 1726, five times as much rice could be bought for a rupee as at this day, consequently 142 lacks was equal to what an assessment of seven hundred and eighty-three lacks would be now. After stating these facts in reply to Mr. Francis in 1777, Mr. Hastings said, “ The severity which was used in levying the  
 “ revenue in Sujah Cawn’s time, is also a strong  
 “ presumption against the lightness and modera-  
 “ tion of the assessment. The indignities, the  
 “ stripes and tortures even to death, which were  
 “ exercised in the collections under the Moguls,  
 “ have been utterly unknown in any period, since  
 “ the government of the provinces has devolved  
 “ to the Company, and serve as a collateral proof,  
 “ that the assessment in the times which preceded  
 “ was intolerably grievous and oppressive.”

Of the injustice of Mr. Francis, in imputing the establishment of the farming system to Mr. Hastings, that gentleman, in the same minute, speaks in the following terms :

“ To whom does Mr. Francis allude, when he  
 “ speaks



“ speaks of the shameful practice of racking and har-  
 “ rassing the country with farming systems and an-  
 “ nual settlements? Not *to me*, I found the farming  
 “ already established throughout the country: all  
 “ the orders of the Company; *all*, without excepti-  
 “ on, *enjoined it*. I made it general, and received their  
 “ commendations for it; I lengthened the period  
 “ of these leases, which *before* were *annual*, to five  
 “ years. This was considered by many, as a bold  
 “ innovation. *If a perpetual assessment shall ever*  
 “ *be allowed to take place*, I shall hope *at least to be*  
 “ *remembered as one of the first projectors* of it.”

The perpetual assessment has at last taken place, and it certainly was, at all times, the favourite plan of Mr. Hastings. He wished first to know the real value of the lands, and took infinite pains to acquire that knowledge.

Having satisfactorily, as I hope, refuted every thing that Mr. Belfham has said on the subject of the revenues of Bengal, I shall proceed to the Rohilla War.

Were the origin of every war, which has desolated the world from our earliest knowledge of it, to be traced, it would appear that no war was commenced on grounds more just and politic, or in its duration so short.

Mountains and rivers form the natural boundaries to states and empires. Oude, and the country now denominated Rohilcund, form one very extensive

extensive plain, terminating in a point to the north, at the extremity of Rohileund, defended on the western by the Ganges, and on the eastern frontier, by the same ridge of mountains.

While the Sovereign of Oude was an object of jealousy to the British government, it was true policy to preserve the Rohillas in a state of independence.

When a contrary policy prevailed, and when it was believed, that every addition to the power of Oude brought wealth and security to Bengal, then it was true policy to annex Rohileund to the dominion of Oude.

But however desirable in point of policy it might be, to annex Rohileund to Oude, I trust there is no Englishman so profligate as to defend the war upon that ground alone ; unless the *justice* be as clear as the policy, the conquest of Rohileund was as atrocious an act as the partition of Poland.

In order to place this subject in a true point of view, it may be necessary to state the rise and progress of the Rohilla tribe.

They were Afghan Tartars, who invaded the province of Kutteir, now called Rohileund, after Nadir Shah had entered Indostan.

Various ineffectual attempts were made to expel these northern invaders ; but in the year 1746, Allee Mahomed, their Chief, was quietly fixed in possession of the district of Kutteir, which from that time was called Rohileund.

The

The use which he had made of the power that he had acquired is thus described by a very accurate and sensible historian\*.

“ Allee Mahomed finding himself at length permanently fixed on what had so long been the object of his wishes, began immediately to settle the interior police of this territory, under proper regulations, and that he might not be incommoded by the incursions of the petty Rajahs, who held tracts along the foot of the Cummown Hills, he rooted out all those from whom he had any apprehensions, and drove them to the other side of the Ganges, without any regard to their prior right in those lands, which had been the seats of their ancestors for many centuries. This was a mode of acting diametrically opposite to what had ever been observed by the Mahomedan settlers in Indostan. The Rohilla Chief, however, did not stop here; but conducted himself towards all the Hindoos of any rank or consequence in Rohilcund (the only name by which Kutteir was after this distinguished), with a cruel and unjustifiable severity. He deprived such as were Zemindars of their lands, and the public officers of their employments, and filled the places thus vacated with his creatures.”

Mr. Hamilton adds, that though this conduct

\* Charles Hamilton, Esq. Translator of the Hedaya, or Commentary on the Mahomedan Laws.



was harsh and tyrannical, it was the only means by which he could secure the country he had usurped.

Allee Mahomed died in the year 1749, leaving six sons, and dividing Rohilcund amongst them, the eldest of whom was in his minority. He appointed three persons guardians to his sons during their infancy, and delegated the government to them. One of these guardians, Haffez Rhamut Cawn, was a man of obscure origin, who had originally been a petty merchant, trading between Dehly and Lahore. In the confusion that ensued between the years 1749 and 1765, Rohilcund was subject to frequent invasions; and the original inhabitants, to whom the Rohillas had left a bare subsistence, sustained the severest distresses. The Rohillas were repeatedly compelled to fly to their hills and fortresses for their security.

Sufdar Jung, the father of Sujah Dowlah, never was able to expel the Rohillas; and Sujah Dowlah himself having quarrelled with the English in 1764, lost his dominions, which, by the generosity of the British government, were restored to him in 1765. Between that year and 1772, he was an object of jealousy to the Governor and Council of Calcutta, and consequently he was unable to attack the Rohillas.

Such was the *situation* of these Afghans, when Mr. Hastings became Governor of Bengal, in the month of April 1772.

Upon

Upon his accession to the government, a new system was established—a system, which was the result of reason and common sense. He determined to confine the views and the expences of the Company within their own provinces, and recalled all our troops from Sujah Dowlah's dominions.

But the seeds of a different policy had taken too deep a root to be eradicated, long before the government of Mr. Hastings. From 1765 to 1772, with a trifling intermission, one-third of the British army had been stationed at Allahabad, and was paid by the extraction of specie from Bengal, which, together with the annual remittance of twenty-six lacks of rupees to the King, had brought very great distress upon our own provinces. In 1771, the Mahrattas prevailed upon the unfortunate King, Shah Allum, to quit our protection, and to proceed to Dehly, promising to seat him upon the throne, and to confer upon him the power enjoyed by his ancestors.

Possessed of his person, they compelled him to cede to them the provinces of Corah and Allahabad. They applied to him for funnuds for the Bengal provinces, and they prepared to invade Rohilcund and Oude.

Common danger made an alliance between Sujah Dowlah and the Rohillas, a very desirable event to both parties.

H

It

It was concluded under the mediation of the British Commander in Chief, in the summer of 1772.

The conditions were, that Sujah Dowlah should march with his whole force to expel the Marattas, should they invade Rohilcund in the succeeding year; and that after the completion of the service, the Rohillas should pay him the sum of forty lacks of rupees.

Sujah Dowlah, doubtful of the competency of his own force, applied to our Government for assistance.

On this new state of affairs, Mr. Hastings determined not to refuse the required aid, provided a subsidy was fixed, equal to the expence which the British Government should incur. To this condition Sujah Dowlah agreed. In the month of January 1773, a brigade of the British troops, consisting of five thousand infantry, joined the forces of Sujah Dowlah, and the united armies marched into Rohilcund, to repel the expected invasion of the Marattas.

They completely performed the service, as Mr. Belsham admits in a note in his second edition, though he chose, in direct opposition to positive evidence, to deny it in his first edition.

The Marattas, in the summer of 1773, returned to the Deccan. Sir Robert Barker, under whose mediation the treaty with Sujah Dowlah was concluded,



cluded, demanded the performance of the conditions: this the Rohillas first evaded, and afterwards peremptorily refused. Sujah Dowlah, by his subsidy to the British troops, and by the expence of bringing fifty thousand men into the field, had expended a much larger sum than forty lacks of rupees.

Sir Robert Barker, in the hope of inducing the Rohillas to do justice to Sujah Dowlah, remained behind the British army, after the Marattas had retreated, and in various letters to the Governor and Council, at Calcutta, represented the notorious breach of faith committed by these people.

The following extracts are taken from his letters in April and May 1773. They were before Mr. Belsham; and had he possessed the candour and impartiality of an historian, he would have condescended to notice them.

“ In consequence of the retreat of the Marattas  
“ towards the Jumma, the Rohilla Chiefs are but  
“ little inclined to perform their agreements, and  
“ already begin to hesitate.

“ I beg leave to send you the copy of the Rohilla treaty, by which you will perceive how  
“ *literally* it has been *executed* and *performed*, notwithstanding *the evasion of their Chiefs*.

“ It is well known, that neither *promises* nor  
“ *oaths*, have been able to bind *this treacherous sect*  
“ *of people to their engagements.*”

In another letter, Sir Robert Barker says, that the Rohillas had been intriguing with the Marattas, and were carrying on the same double dealings which had heretofore distinguished that treacherous sect.

Such was the state of affairs when Mr. Hastings met Sujah Dowlah at Benares, in September 1773.

Mr. Belsbam says, that the Rohillas offered to submit the matter in dispute to the mediation of Mr. Hastings. This is a most unfounded assertion. That Sujah Dowlah had just grounds for declaring war against the Rohillas, will hardly be denied by any man but Mr. Belsbam, though that gentleman, with a knowledge of the preceding facts, has ventured to assert, that "the causes or  
"pretexts of the quarrel, with respect to the  
"Vizier himself, *were palpably unreasonable and un-  
"just."*

Though the Marattas had retreated to Decan, they were expected to return in the winter, not as enemies, but allies to the Rohillas. Oude, on the Rohilcund side, is entirely defenceless, and the Ganges only fordable in Rohilcund. Supposing, therefore, that the Rohillas had afforded just grounds for war, it was true policy, in 1774, to deprive them of a political power, which they had usurped not thirty years before. The simple question then will be, whether their breach of a solemn engagement, to which we were unquestionably

ably parties, was a just ground for war on our part. To treat this as a war merely for the recovery of forty lacks of rupees, is in the highest degree absurd. The breach of faith, manifested in the refusal to pay that sum, was the cause and justification of the war; the *object* of it was, to give security to the Vizier in future, by annexing Rohilcund to Oude.

Was there any thing in this proceeding repugnant to the strictest laws of political morality?

The late war with Tippoo originated from a very trifling cause. His encroachments on the dominions of the Rajah of Travancore: but the encroachment fully justified the war, and when once undertaken, Lord Cornwallis naturally looked far beyond the original cause of the quarrel. Travancore was easily secured: but his Lordship aroused all India against Tippoo, and very wisely deprived him of half his dominions, and half his treasures, on the restoration of peace.

Much eloquence has been wasted, in debating, whether France or the allied powers, were the original aggressors in the French war; but the terms on which peace will ultimately be concluded, can alone depend upon the success attained by the parties. We wish undoubtedly to procure indemnity for the past, and security for the future: so does France. She declares the Rhine to be her natural boundary. If she can make it her real  
boundary



boundary at the peace, will she be justly accused of folly, and of immoderate ambition? The Ganges which flows through Rohilcund and Oude to the west, the mountains which defend them to the north and to the east, as naturally make the two countries one, as the sea surrounding Great Britain, seemed to point out that England and Scotland should enjoy the same government.— But until James the First succeeded by descent to both Crowns, so desirable an event could not be brought about. Rohilcund naturally forms a part of the dominion of Oude; but the Afghan Tartars being in possession of it, before we acquired power in Bengal, we had not a shadow of right to dispossess them, unless by an aggression they had afforded just grounds for our commencing hostilities against them.

The British troops entered Rohilcund in the month of April 1774, and in October of the same year, the treaty of peace was concluded, by which Fyzoola Khan, the only man who had *a shadow of right* to the country, was secured in the possession of a much more extensive and fertile district, than Haffez Rhamut, his guardian, had permitted him to govern.\*

Such was the origin, the progress, and the close of the Rohilla war. The *natives* of Rohilcund

\* Mr. Hamilton's History.

were entirely unconcerned in the issue of it: to *them* it was of no moment, whether Sujah Dowlah, or Haffez Rhamut, was their Sovereign.

Mr. Belsham, who has, in a manner highly disgraceful to him as an historian, misrepresented *the whole transaction*, affirms it to have been “a war undertaken, for the absolute conquest and extirpation of the Rohilla nation.”\*

In this passage, he has *closely* copied an original (Mr. Burke), whom on all other occasions he treats with the utmost contempt.

“The whole nation (said Mr. Burke) with inconsiderable exceptions, was slaughtered or banished.”

Mr. Belsham, by an artifice most unworthy of an historian, induces his readers to believe that Mr. Pitt concurred in opinion with Mr. Burke.

Mr. Belsham says, that when the Rohilla charge was debated, “Mr. Pitt gave a silent vote against the motion: but the ground on which he voted was tolerably well ascertained by a declaration he had previously made, when the subject of the Rohilla war was in a more general way discussed:—That he considered that transaction in a horribly alarming point of view; and as being so repugnant to every sentiment of human nature, that nothing could justify it, but the strongest mo-

\* Vol. III. page 64.

"tives of political expediency, and invincible principles of retributive justice."\*

Would not any man believe, that Mr. Pitt concurred in opinion with Mr. Belsham and Mr. Burke, that the whole Rohilla nation had been slaughtered or banished?

Mark how the real state of the transaction will expose Mr. Belsham.

In the debate to which Mr. Belsham alludes, Mr. Burke had mentioned the Rohilla war in the manner he always did mention it, and Mr. Pitt, in reply, delivered himself as follows:

"There was no person who had heard the  
 "Right Honourable Gentleman, but would have  
 "imagined that this event had been in fact attended by the unexampled barbarity, even not  
 "less than the massacre of all the wretched inhabitants of the country, without distinction of  
 "age, sex, or condition. It was merely the removal of the Rohillas to a different place. He did,  
 "indeed, consider such an extermination, though  
 "far short of letting loose all the horrors of fire  
 "and sword, (as the Right Honourable Gentleman had endeavoured to represent the affair of  
 "the Rohillas) *in a most horribly alarming point of  
 "view, and so repugnant to every sentiment of human  
 "nature, that nothing could justify it, but the strongest*

\* Vol. IV. page 107.



" motives of political expediency, and the invincible principles of retributive justice."

Could any Gentleman reading Mr. Belsham's statement, suppose that Mr. Pitt had thus exposed the gross misrepresentation of Mr. Burke? Would he not rather believe, that he confirmed that fallacious statement, and had admitted that *the whole nation, with inconsiderable exceptions, was slaughtered and banished.*

The extent of the slaughter, and of the banishment, are proved by evidence, of which Mr. Belsham was in possession.

In the decisive battle of St. George, there were forty thousand Rohillas in arms. Between two and three thousand fell in the action, and in the pursuit; when peace was concluded, twenty thousand, including followers, crossed the Ganges, to a country possessed by Cabita Cawn, one of their Chiefs, who immediately entertained them in his service. The followers were in the proportion of three to one. This is Colonel Champion's account, the Commander in Chief at the time: \* so that five thousand Rohillas were the number who crossed the Ganges. Major Balfour † supposes that a larger number actually crossed the Ganges; but of these, he says, many returned, and afterwards lived unmolested in Rohilcund.

\* Colonel Champion's Evidence.

† Major Balfour's Evidence.

Very different indeed is the real fact, from Mr. Belsham's and Mr. Burke's representation. Between two and three thousand Rohillas fell in action, and five thousand crossed the Ganges. These men were either the original invaders of the country, or had entered it since the invasion, or were the sons of those who first invaded Rohilcund. But, I trust, there is no man, a native of Great Britain, who does not look upon a war productive of these evils, (trifling and insignificant as they are, when compared with Mr. Burke's statement) in a horribly alarming point of view, unless the *justice* of the war were as clear as its policy.

Of the *cruelties* supposed to have been practised by Sujah Dowlah during the few months that the war lasted, Mr. Belsham has given a long account, carefully *sinking* all the evidence, which proves that in some instances the facts were grossly exaggerated, and in others totally false. Colonel Champion admitted that he received his information *from spies*—a race of men who are very apt to give such information as they think will please; and the Colonel and Sujah Dowlah were on very bad terms.

Major Balfour says, that many stories were circulated and believed in camp of the cruelties practised by Sujah Dowlah, which from subsequent enquiries he discovered to be false.

Mr.

Mr. Hamilton, an author of high reputation, unaffected candour, and of a most irreproachable character, has written an account of the Rohillas, compiled from materials given him by a Rohilla.—He says, that “the sons of Doondee Khan, their  
 “wives and children, together with the family  
 “and immediate retainers of Haffez Rahmut, and  
 “numbers of the inhabitants of Barellee, Owlah,  
 “and Bissōolee, and other places were sent to Al-  
 “lahabad, under the conduct of his brother-in-  
 “law, the Nabob Salar Jung.”

“Much has been said of the *excessive cruelties*  
 “practised by Sujah Dowlah on the Rohilla pri-  
 “soners, and in particular, on the family of Haf-  
 “fez Rahmut. The above, however, is *all* that  
 “is mentioned by the Rohilla narrator upon this  
 “subject; and notwithstanding *every possible en-*  
 “*quiry*, the writer has never been able to discover a  
 “single document from which he might ascertain  
 “any one particular of this alledged ill usage, un-  
 “less the inconveniences necessarily attendant  
 “upon confinement, and removal are to be term-  
 “ed such.”

To a man who knows any thing of India, nothing can be more contemptible than Mr. Belsham's statements.—He gives the following extract from a petition sent to Colonel Champion *by the son of Haffez Rahmut*.—“He (the Vizier) has  
 “deprived us of our riches, and even of our ho-



“nour; and not satisfied with that, he is going to send us prisoners to Fyzabad. We desire no country, no riches, no palaces; but at Bissfoolee are the tombs of our noble ancestors;—near under some shade, we beg permission to spend the remainder of our days as Facquires.”\*

Hafiez Rahmut himself was a man of very obscure origin, originally a trader, then a soldier of fortune, not born in Rohilcund, but an invader of it under Allee Mahomed, who left him one of the guardians to his sons during his minority. He afterwards *usurped* the power, which he first received *in trust*, for a *limited term*.—For a son of Hafiez Rahmut therefore to talk of the tombs of his noble ancestors being at Bissfoolee, is an imposition which could only have been attempted on a supposition of our total ignorance of the history of the Rohillas: and indeed, until Mr. Hastings succeeded to the government of Bengal, we were unacquainted with their history.

The *ground* upon which Mr. Pitt negatived the Rohilla war, when brought forward as a criminal charge against Mr. Hastings, is also misrepresented by Mr. Bellham,

He supposes the Minister to have voted in favour of Mr. Hastings, *not on the merits of the question*, but because the transaction had occurred

so many years ago ; “ and that it would be highly  
 “ inconsistent and absurd to consider Mr. Hastings  
 “ in the light of a culprit, for any measures taken  
 “ by him previously to the period in which he had  
 “ been nominated, by Act of Parliament, Governor  
 “ General of Bengal, which was the highest cer-  
 “ tificate of parliamentary approbation.” \*

In this opinion, Mr. Belsham is totally mistaken. The debate on the Rohilla war lasted two very long days : it closed at seven o'clock of the second morning. Both the justice and the policy of the war were ably defended by Mr. Grenville and Lord Mulgrave : Mr. Pitt had signified his intention to speak upon it also, but was prevented by fatigue. After the division, Mr. Burke proposed to enter certain resolutions on the Journals. Mr. Pitt strongly opposed this motion, and said, that though he had been too much exhausted to deliver his opinion during the debate, he entirely concurred in every sentiment uttered by Mr. Grenville and Lord Mulgrave, both as to the justice and the policy of the war. This is a fact, of the truth of which Mr. Belsham may be convinced, by applying either to Mr. Burke Mr. Francis, or Mr. Fox, as I stood close to them when Mr. Pitt spoke after the division.

No man seems more alive “ to the eccentricities

\* Vol. IV. p. 107.

and follies of Mr. Burke," than Mr. Belsham : but upon the subject of India there is not an eccentricity or a folly of Mr. Burke's which Mr. does not adopt as gospel.

" Hafez Rahmut (says Mr. Belsham, as Mr. Burke had said before him) " was renowned " throughout the East for the superiority of his " intellectual talents and personal accomplish- " ments : " thus confounding Hafez Rahmut the Rohilla, with Hafez, the celebrated poet of Shiraz, who flourished above four hundred years ago. Hafez was neither a poet, nor a man of letters\*. His original name was Rahmut Cawn.— The title of Hafez (Anglice the Protector) he afterwards assumed, as being expressive of his rank and office. He was guardian of the sons of his master, Allee Mahomed, of whom one alone was living Fyzoola Cawn, in 1774 ; and Hafez betrayed his trust, by keeping all the power in his own hands to the day of his death.

I believe I have discovered the source from whence Mr. Belsham drew all his information on the subject of the Rohilla war ; it is, if I am right, from an anonymous pamphlet published in 1786, and entitled, " Observations on the Defence of Mr. Hastings," printed by Debrett. The supposed author of this was Mr. Francis.

\* Mr. Hamilton's History of the Rohillas.



In this pamphlet there is the following expression, which Mr. Belsham copies into his History.\*

“There is no power on earth can annihilate such a question : though it were dead, yet shall it live. The cause by its own energy shall turn upon the force that oppresses it, and sting to destruction the vulnerable heel that endeavours to keep it down.”

How far it became the dignity of an historian to resort solely to a virulent anonymous pamphlet for information on an important public question, I leave the unprejudiced part of the world to determine.

With respect to the *policy* of the Rohilla war, surely no rational man, at this time of day, can have doubt upon the subject.

In the year 1774, many very sensible men did express doubts as to the policy of adding so considerably to the power of Sujah Dowlah ; and Mr. Francis truly said, a few days after he arrived in Calcutta, that Mr. Hastings had departed from the system of policy established in Bengal, and approved by the highest authorities at home. The fact was fully admitted by Mr. Hastings. From the departure of Lord Clive, in 1767, to his accession in 1772, it had been the fashion (and there is a fashion in politics as in dress) to talk of the am-

\* Vol. III. p. 77.

bition and dangerous designs of Sujah Dowlah. Mr. Hastings ridiculed this idea, and strenuously contended, that by adding to his power, we increased his dependance upon our Government. The Company had been so much in the habit of hearing of the great power of Sujah Dowlah, that they were alarmed, and therefore they voted, in 1775, that the Rohilla war was founded on *wrong policy*, because it added to his power.

But in 1796 this is not a question of *speculation*, but of *fact*. The experience of *twenty-one years* has proved the truth of Mr. Hastings's prediction in 1774; namely, that the extensions of the dominion of Oude would render the Sovereign of that country more dependent on the British government. From 1774 to *this day*, one-third of our army has been stationed in the dominions of the Nabob of Oude, and paid from his treasury—such has been the *positive good*. What were the evils which might have happened, if the Rohilla war had not been undertaken, I may fairly state.—In January 1775, Sujah Dowlah died.—No art of medicine could have prolonged his life beyond that period. His successor, young and inexperienced, was placed at the head of a government which was immediately distracted.—His army was large, and very ill paid.—The treasures left by his father, amounting to more than two millions sterling, were unjustly secreted by his mother.

Under

Under these circumstances, would the Rohillas have been contented with the narrow slip which they had acquired to the westward of the Ganges in the year 1746? They were a hardy, brave, and ambitious race of men. Fresh hordes of Tartars would have joined them, and Oude must have been conquered by those warriors, to whose standard all the northern adventurers would have flocked. The spirit which animates these people may be known by the following event.

Fyzoola Cawn, by the peace of 1774, was left in possession of the district of Rampore, supposed to produce a revenue of fifteen lacks of rupees, but in reality worth double that amount. He died in the year 1793, leaving treasures, amounting to two millions sterling, to his eldest son.—The Nabob of Oude continued him in the possession of Rampore, but he was assassinated by his brother, who immediately took the field, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, having previously possessed himself of the treasures. He advanced boldly to attack the British army; and though ultimately defeated, his cavalry broke our left wing, and we lost more men and officers than in any former action in India.

That it was *true policy* to destroy the political power of the Rohillas in 1774, no man who considers the extraordinary rise of this people, and the progress they made in so short a time, can pos-



fibly doubt. But I am as ready to admit, as Mr. Belsham can be, that unless the war was founded *in justice*, we have much to answer for. I have stated the facts *fairly*, and I leave my readers to determine, whether a breach of a solemn engagement was or was not a just ground for the war.

The next point which Mr. Belsham takes up, is the stoppage of the Mogul's tribute.

A year prior to Mr. Hastings's return to Bengal, the Mogul had quitted our protection, and was in fact a prisoner with the Marattas. To have remitted twenty-six lacks of rupees *nominally* to him, but in reality to the Marattas, would have been an act of folly, or of treachery. Mr. Hastings therefore withheld the payment; and in 1775, the Directors, in concurrence with the British Minister, *prohibited* the payment of the tribute in future. To censure Mr. Hastings is an act of the greatest injustice—to censure the Directors and the King's Minister is an act of folly.

In the year 1784, Mr. Hastings conceived that he had a fair opportunity of making the Mogul easy and happy for life, without risque or expence, and by the mere influence of the British name. That he could have made the Mogul respectable and independent, is beyond all doubt; but his Council were of a different opinion, and the unhappy Monarch was left to his fate. Three years after Mr. Hastings left Bengal, a Rohilla Chief

Chief put out the eyes of the Mogul. What inconsistency is there in the conduct of Mr. Hastings to this unfortunate monarch? In 1773, he would not impoverish Bengal, by remitting a large sum annually, not a rupee of which the Mogul would ever receive. He expressed an anxiety at a subsequent period to place him, by the mere influence of the British name, in a state of ease and independence.

These are the principal events which Mr. Belsham notices as having happened, between the period of Mr. Hastings's accession to the government in 1772, and the arrival of Mr. Francis in 1774.

But other events of considerable importance took place. The seat of government was removed from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, and the latter place became next to London, one of the first cities in the universe. The stipend of the Nabob was reduced from thirty-two to sixteen lacks of rupees. The monopoly of opium was taken from the Company's servants at Patna, and the profits carried to the credit of the Company. The duties upon salt were so regulated, as to add considerably to the public revenues.

Mr. Belsham *admits*, that on the accession of Mr. Hastings, the *income* barely balanced the expenditure.

The engagements with Sujah Dowlah brought

ninety lacks of rupees in specie into Bengal. The *annual income* was improved to the following extent :

|                                                   |              |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
|                                                   | £.           |
| Stoppage of the Mogul's tribute                   | 300,000      |
| Reduction of the Nabob's tribute                  | 200,000      |
| Monopoly of opium - - -                           | 50,000       |
| Salt duties - - -                                 | 200,000      |
| Subsidy of a brigade paid by Sujah Dowlah - - - - | 300,000      |
| Reduction of Minister's allowances                | 60,000       |
|                                                   | <hr/>        |
|                                                   | £. 1,110,000 |

In the landed revenues there was very little variation.

Here then is an *actual difference* in the expenditure of the Company, amounting to one million, one hundred and ten thousand pounds; and a million sterling in specie received from Oude, in consequence of the measures adopted by Mr. Hastings. If those measures were *wrong*, the *whole responsibility* rested upon Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Francis had *all the advantages*. Instead of having a share in a government, where the income and expenditure balanced each other, as it had done *two years before*, he became a member of Administration, when the receipt exceeded the annual expenditure more than a million sterling, and he had nothing to do but to enjoy the benefits



fits resulting from the acts of Mr. Hastings, and to find fault with them. The death of Sujah Dowlah, which happened in January 1775, afforded an opportunity of annexing Benares and Ghazipore to Bengal, and of adding seventy thousand pounds a year to the Oude subsidy, which was a further increase of five hundred thousand pounds a year.

Is it possible for any Gentleman, who relies upon the accuracy of Mr. Belfham, to believe, that in the two first years of the administration of Mr. Hastings, he adopted all those measures, to which the Company owes its present prosperity? By his internal regulations the income of Bengal greatly exceeded its expenditure.—By his external arrangements, that is, by his treaty with Sujah Dowlah in 1773, our influence was extended from the source of the Ganges to the Ocean. Benares and Ghazipore were added to our dominion—a million sterling in specie was brought into Bengal, and one-third of our army was maintained by the Sovereign of Oude.—In one-and-twenty years, no change has been made, except that the country has been gradually *improving*. But to Mr. Hastings is the nation indebted for all that she draws from India. Those who read Mr. Belfham, and *believe him*, must conclude, that *desperate* as was the state of Bengal when Mr. Hastings

Hastings arrived there in 1772, it was *more desperate* when Mr. Francis landed in 1774.

The next point to which Mr. Belsham proceeds, is to a direct and personal attack upon Mr. Hastings, for the corrupt receipt of Presents.

Mr. Belsham crowds into less than four pages a subject which was formed into seven distinct charges; which employed the Prosecutors two complete sessions, the Defendant a part of a third, and which took up nearly a complete session in the reply. In the discussions in the House of Lords, previous to the judgment, each allegation was investigated with the utmost minuteness, by some of the most enlightened Members of that House. On the branches of this charge, which Mr. Belsham calls *the most important*, and which, *in his opinion*, put the guilt of Mr. Hastings *beyond all doubt*, he was acquitted by the unanimous verdict of his judges. On the other heads, which Mr. Belsham confounds with the two first, he was acquitted by a majority of five to one.

The historian who circulates an opinion of the guilt of an individual, in opposition to so solemn a decision, and after so minute an enquiry, incurs very great responsibility. He is bound upon every principle of honour and justice, neither to garble nor misrepresent a single circumstance to his readers: if he does, he is guilty of the double crime of injustice to an individual, and to his country.

country. Who that reads and believes Mr. Belsham's history of the Presents, can hesitate to pronounce Mr. Hastings guilty; the Managers faithless to the trust reposed in them, for having wasted three years on so plain and so short a case, and the Lords corrupt for having ultimately pronounced an acquittal against evidence?

Speaking of Mr. Burke's conduct towards Mr. Hastings, Mr. Belsham says :

“ To the most *careless* observer it was apparent,  
 “ that in numerous instances *facts were distorted*  
 “ *and disguised*; that the *most invidious construction*  
 “ *was invariably annexed* even to the *most indifferent*  
 “ *actions*; that every thing was seen through the  
 “ *medium of false and artificial colourings*; that the  
 “ *dignified candour*, which gives *weight to an ac-*  
 “ *cusation*, was *wholly wanting*. His *calmness* was  
 “ *settled rancour*—his *warmth* the phrenzy of *rage*  
 “ *and revenge.*” \*

To Mr. Belsham I may truly say,

“ *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.*”

If I were to consider Mr. Hastings only, it would be fully sufficient to oppose the judgment of the highest tribunal in this kingdom to the remarks of Mr. Belsham; but that my readers may form a proper idea of Mr. Belsham's qualifications

\* Vol. IV. page 70.



for the task he has undertaken, I shall first insert all that he has said on the subject of the Presents, and then shew, as concisely as possible, that neither Mr. Burke, nor any man living, can distort or disguise facts, or annex the most invidious construction to the most indifferent actions, in a greater degree than this modern historian.

\* “The disinterestedness of Mr. Hastings, (says Mr. Belsham) in all points of *pecuniary concern*, had in England been the theme of high panegyric ; but *certain facts*, which came to the knowledge of the new Counsellors on or soon after their arrival in India, set *this part of his character* in a light which could scarcely be considered as problematical. Of these it will suffice to touch on two or three of the most conspicuous. By the Regulating Act of 1773, a salary of twenty-five thousand pounds *per annum* was settled on the Governor, and he was in the most positive and peremptory manner prohibited from receiving any presents or donation in any manner or on any account whatever ; and on his accession to the government, Mr. Hastings, in the ostentation of his generosity, had declared, that this prohibition admitted neither of refinement nor misconstruction, and, in his opinion, an opposition would be to incur the penalty.”

“ On the 30th of March 1775, a petition was  
 “ laid before the Board, setting forth that Khan  
 “ Jehan Khan, then Phousdar of Houghly, had  
 “ obtained that office from the Governor, with a  
 “ salary of seventy-two thousand rupees per an-  
 “ num, and that the said Phousdar had given a  
 “ receipt or bribe *to the patron of the city*, to pay  
 “ him annually thirty-six thousand rupees out of  
 “ the salary above mentioned. It being moved  
 “ that the petitioner should be ordered to attend  
 “ the next day, to make good his charge, Mr.  
 “ Hastings objected to the motion, which being  
 “ nevertheless carried, the Governor declared that  
 “ he would not suffer a judicial enquiry into his  
 “ conduct at the Board, of which he was Presi-  
 “ dent, *and dissolved the meeting.*”

“ Other sums from various persons, arising in the  
 “ aggregate to a vast amount, were acknowledged by  
 “ Mr. Hastings in his confidential dispatches, doubtless  
 “ to guard against the effects of similar informations,  
 “ to be privately received; but, as the Governor  
 “ General alledged, subsequently converted to the Com-  
 “ pany's use. This, however, did by no means sa-  
 “ tisfactorily appear. As an apology for his original  
 “ intention of concealment, he says: ‘ Having had  
 ‘ occasion to disburse from my own cash many  
 ‘ sums, which, though required to enable me to  
 ‘ execute the duties of my station, I have omitted

' to enter in my public accounts; and my own  
 ' fortune being unequal to so heavy a charge, I  
 ' have resolved to reimburse myself in the mode  
 ' most suitable to the situation of your affairs, by  
 ' charging the same in my Durbar accounts of the  
 ' present year, and crediting them in a sum pri-  
 ' vately received.—“ On the first suggestion of suspi-  
 “ cion, as to the motives of *this conduct*, he professed  
 “ to the Court of Directors, September 1775, that  
 “ it was his fixed determination *most fully and libe-*  
 “ *rally to explain every circumstance.* Being called  
 “ *upon by the Court, after a very long interval for*  
 “ *this promised explanation*, he declared, that he had  
 “ been prevented from the execution of *this design*  
 “ by a variety of *more important occupations*; and  
 “ that the submission which his respect would have  
 “ enjoined him to pay to the command imposed  
 “ upon him, was *lost to his recollection.*”

“ But by far the most remarkable accusation of  
 “ this nature was preferred by the Rajah Nund-  
 “ comar to the Supreme Council in the month of  
 “ March 1775, of various sums amounting to  
 “ many hundred thousand rupees, received by the  
 “ Governor General for offices and employments  
 “ corruptly disposed of by him, and of this the  
 “ Rajah, who was a native Hindoo of the highest  
 “ rank, *offered to produce incontrovertible evidence.*  
 “ Instead of stating any thing in his defence,

Mr.



“ Mr. Hastings declared that he would not suffer  
 “ Nundcomar to appear before the Board as his ac-  
 “ cuser, and dissolved the meeting.”

I shall now shew, as concisely as possible, the various misrepresentations which Mr. Belsham has crowded into less than four pages,

1st. He quotes one part of the clause in the Regulating Act, which prohibits the receipt of Presents by any British subject, *on any account or pretence whatsoever*, but omits the *material words* in the clause, *for his own use and behalf*. He says, that Mr. Hastings, *on his accession to the government* declared, *in the ostentation of his generosity*, that this clause neither admitted of refinement nor misconstruction. The fact is, that the declaration was not, nor could it be, made *on his accession to the government*, which was in April 1772. It was made in August 1774, the Act taking place the 1st day of that month; neither was it made *in the ostentation of his generosity*, nor upon a point in which he had any personal concern, but upon the following occasion;—The Nabob of Oude, Sujah Dowlah, made a present to a part of the British army of ten lacks of rupees. Mr. Hastings immediately gave his consent to this money being received and divided; but upon inspecting the Regulating Act of 1773, he wrote to the Commander in Chief, that he had not the power to

authorise the division of that present, the law being so clear as to admit "neither of refinement nor misconstruction." He therefore recommended that the money should be received from Sujah Dowlah, that it should remain a deposit in the treasury, and he promised to recommend to the Directors to allow the army to divide it. He did so in the strongest manner, and the money has been divided amongst the troops.

2d. He pays no attention to dates. His second paragraph relates to a transaction which began on the 30th of March 1775 : his third, to transactions commencing in 1780, and ending in 1785, entirely unconnected with the former—his fourth paragraph relates to a transaction which commenced the 11th of March 1775. This total disregard of order is contrary to the practice of historians, and tends to render the whole account confused and perplexed, at the same time that it leads his readers to entertain the most unfavourable opinion of Mr. Hastings.

3d. By commencing with a garbled recital of the Act of 1773, and then going to his instances, his readers must conclude that Mr. Hastings, in every instance, was charged with a breach of that Act ; whereas, in fact, the Act had not passed when he was supposed to have received bribes from Nundcomar, and Khan Jehan Khan. The  
corruption

corruption would be the same, if the charges were true; but Mr. Belfham is either very artful or very careless in his mode of telling the story.

4th. He merely states, that when Nundcomar offered to produce *incontrovertible proofs* of the corruption of Mr. Hastings, he refused to admit him, and dissolved the Council. By this garbled statement, his readers are shamefully imposed upon, and led very naturally to pronounce Mr. Hastings guilty. Had Mr. Belfham told *the whole truth*, no such conclusion could have been drawn by them. Mr. Hastings expressly told Mr. Francis and his colleagues, that *they* might examine Nundcomar in his *absence*, and institute any further proceedings they thought proper. Mr. Francis and his colleagues *did examine Nundcomar*, and, after hearing all he had to say, they asked him if he had *any further proofs to offer*. Nundcomar asserted that he had not, and withdrew.

5th. Mr. Belfham *omits* to state, that Nundcomar's examination was transmitted to England, where it was deemed so utterly undeserving of credit, that the Directors would neither file a bill against Mr. Hastings, nor would they ask him, whether the information was *true or false*, though he had offered to satisfy them on the points, *on which he had been so injuriously arraigned*, in  
any



*any manner or form they might think proper to prescribe.*

6th. He gives the same garbled account of the story of Khan Jehan Khan, which expressly resembled the preceding. Mr. Hastings never did attempt to stop any enquiry into his own conduct. He would not be present when a majority proceeded to violences which the heat of party alone could have occasioned.

7th. He quotes half a sentence of a letter, written by Mr. Hastings, to the Directors in September 1775 : " It is my fixed determination  
" fully and liberally to explain every circum-  
" stance." He *omits* the following words : " Of  
" my conduct, on the points on which I have been  
" so injuriously arraigned, in any form or manner  
" you may please to prescribe."

8th. He says, " Being called upon *for this pro-*  
" *mised explanation, after a very long interval,* Mr.  
" Hastings, in his answer, said that he had been  
" prevented from the execution of this design by  
" a variety of *more important occupations,* and that the  
" submission which his respect would have enjoined  
" ed him to pay to the command imposed upon  
" him, *was lost to his recollection,*" By this bold fallacy, he makes Mr. Hastings guilty in the opinion of every man who believes this statement.

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The Directors never did call upon him for any explanation of the transactions of 1775. They called upon him in March 1784, for the explanation of certain items in an account that he had transmitted to them *in December 1782*. There was a very *short delay* in his answer, for their letter was written in March 1784 *to Bengal*, and they received the answer *in London* in July 1785, yet for that *short delay*, Mr. Hastings apologizes, by using the words quoted by Mr. Belsham. The words are highly proper, as applied *to this transaction*: but if the Directors *had* called upon him for the explanation which he had promised in September 1775, and if he had made *such a reply*, to *such a requisition*, he must have been either guilty or insane.

9th. After giving a garbled account of the story of Khan Jehan Khan, Mr. Belsham says that Mr. Hastings received “*other sums* to a vast amount.” Why not say *when* these *other sums* were received? By omitting to mention *dates*, his readers must conclude that these “*other sums*” were received in 1775, whereas they were in fact received between the years 1780 and 1783.

10th. Mr. Belsham says, that Mr. Hastings communicated the receipt of these “*other sums*, “*doubtless* to guard against the effect of similar “*informations*.” This is a most uncharitable supposition,

position, and comes with a very ill grace from a man who complains with reason of the persecution under which the Dissenters have suffered. He adduces *no fact* in support of his opinion, and the assertion itself is utterly unfounded. Mr. Belsham has done what he censures Mr. Burke for invariably doing: he has put a most invidious construction, on a very meritorious action.

11th. Mr. Belsham says, after speaking of these "other sums,"—"as an apology for concealment," "Mr. Hastings told the Directors, that he had made "various disbursements for the public service, and "repaid himself by a sum privately received." This is downright nonsense: but it is the nonsense of Mr. Belsham, not of Mr. Hastings. He quotes the preceding passage from a letter written by Mr. Hastings in *February* 1784. In December 1782, Mr. Hastings had told the Directors that he had received two hundred thousand pounds for their use, and had paid the money into their treasury. How then *could* a letter, written in *February* 1784, be an apology for concealing what he had discovered in December 1782? The letter of February 1784 stated, that he had received *a further sum* of thirty thousand pounds, and had employed it in defraying certain public expences, which he had incurred in the public service, and he



he transmitted a minute and particular account of those public expences, leaving it to the Company to audit or to reject the accounts.

Having now gone through the whole detail, I do take upon me to affirm, that no man who ever spoke, no man who ever wrote, went beyond Mr. Belsham in misrepresentation.

If Mr. Belsham wrote the passages *himself* on which I have commented, his conduct is inexcusable. If he looked into the story of Nundcomar or Khan Jehan Khan, as it appears on the records, which are also copied into the Eleventh Report of the Select Committee, he could not have published that miserable, garbled, unfaithful statement, which appears in his Memoirs, from any other motive than to injure an individual in the public opinion. If he looked at all into the documents relative to the Presents received by Mr. Hastings *for the use of the Company*, between the years 1780 and 1783, he must have known, that a more malicious or fallacious statement, than that which he has printed, never was given to the world, and he has given it in the character of an historian.

I conclude, therefore, that on this subject of the Presents, Mr. Belsham has not been at the pains to obtain any information of any kind: I think it exceedingly possible, that as his Rohilla History is taken from an anonymous pamphlet,

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supposed

supposed to be written by Mr. Francis, this account of the Presents is taken from some of those libels with which the press abounded in the years 1784 and 1786, when a very powerful faction in this country were silly enough to believe, that the ruin of Mr. Hastings was an object which it was of importance to them to attain.

When the affairs of India had attracted the attention of Parliament, of this country, and of Europe, it surely became the duty of an historian, either totally to pass over, for a time, those transactions which were the subject of a criminal trial, or to take especial care that such facts as he chose to insert in his History were fairly stated.

I must again repeat, that my sole object, in the preceding remarks, has been to expose the ignorance or the prejudices of the historian. There never has been an accusation more thoroughly investigated in a Court of Justice, than that which was preferred against Mr. Hastings, on this head of Mr. Belsham's Memoirs : it involved two questions totally distinct in their nature. The first was, that Mr. Hastings had, in the year 1772, received considerable sums of money for appointments to offices, and had put the money into his own pocket. The second, that he had received two hundred and thirty thousand pounds between the years 1780 and 1783, in breach of the Act of 1773, which though he had ultimately applied to

to the public service, he intended at the time he received it, to convert to his own use—all “the rancour, the rage, and the revenge” of Mr. Burke, to use Mr. Belsham’s words; all the abilities of Mr. Fox; all the industry of the Counsel and the Solicitor, engaged by the Managers, were employed for two years, and in a considerable part of a third, to support the accusation. The result is known. It would be idle therefore to enter into a defence of Mr. Hastings, whose character is fully cleared by the solemn determination of his judges; but it may be useful to expose to public view, the ignorance or the prejudices of Mr. Belsham. A reference to the Public Records, or to the Eleventh Report of the Select Committee, will prove the truth of my remarks.

The next subject upon which Mr. Hastings falls under the lash of Mr. Belsham, is for his conduct to Mahomed Reza Cawn.\* It is very clear to me, that Mr. Belsham does not know who this man was, nor the offices that he had filled.

In the year 1765, when Lord Clive assumed the Duannee, Mahomed Reza Cawn was guardian of the person of the young Nabob of Bengal, and Minister of the country. Lord Clive continued him in those offices, and he appointed him *Nuib Duan* of the provinces, on the part of the India

\* Vol. III. p. 87.



Company. In other words, it was Lord Clive's opinion, that the revenues should be collected, and justice administered to the natives, under the form of a Mahomedan government; and that no Englishman should interfere either in the collection of the revenues, or in the administration of civil and criminal justice, beyond the boundaries of the mercantile factories of the East India Company. His Lordship most strenuously advised his successor, Mr. Verelst, to follow the same system; and the fact is, that from August 1765 to April 1772, Mahomed Reza Cawn was the absolute Sovereign of Bengal.

Mr. Belsham says that, *in this period*, the security of property was destroyed, and the Zemindars deprived of their estates; that gross oppressions reduced the natives to despair, and that famine and pestilence in horrid combination desolated the land. Such were the effects which Mr. Belsham supposes to have been produced by the mal-administration of Mahomed Reza Cawn, between the years 1765 and 1772.\*

Mr. Hastings found this person in the plenitude of power when he succeeded to the government in April 1772. Two days after his accession, he received a public order from the Directors, to dismiss Mahomed Reza Cawn from all his employ-

\* Vol. I. p. 133.

ments, and a *secret order*, to seize his person, and to convey him a prisoner to Calcutta. He was ordered also to bring him to a trial, and to employ Nundcomar, who, as the Directors say, was, from his known enmity to Mahomed Reza Cawn, the most proper person to discover his enormities.\*

The Directors were induced to adopt these violent measures, from informations secretly transmitted to them by Nundcomar; he had assured them that Mahomed Reza Cawn had embezzled many millions of their property, and had made immense sums by monopolizing rice during the famine.

In the execution of these orders, Mr. Hastings behaved with the utmost tenderness and delicacy to the fallen Minister. It was true he obeyed the orders; but he expressed, in a letter to Mahomed Reza Cawn, his concern for the task imposed upon him, and his hope, that the result of the enquiry would prove his innocence.

Mahomed Reza Cawn was brought under a guard to Calcutta. He lived, *not in a prison*, as Mr. Belfham says, but in one of his own country houses, the best in the neighbourhood of Calcutta: he went where he pleased, and received visits from every body, except the members of government, who being appointed his judges, Mr.

\* Minutes of Evidence, page 1039.

Hastings conceived, could not with propriety be allowed to visit him.

Nundcomar was his accuser, and all the delay in the decision of his fate *was solely imputable to that man*. Nundcomar was to produce the proofs. After a most laborious investigation, Mahomed Reza Cawn was fully and honourably acquitted; and so sensible was he of the obligations he owed to Mr. Hastings, as repeatedly to declare, that to his *justice, penetration, and impartiality*, he was indebted for the preservation of his life and honour. If *swearing* could have effected his destruction, Nundcomar produced witnesses amply sufficient to destroy him. The Directors approved the decision, and reinstated Mahomed Reza Cawn in two of his appointments, that of guardian to the Nabob, and chief judge of the provinces, from which offices he was removed at the Nabob's express desire, after he himself became of age, and was the father of *many children*; and when it was preposterous that one man should retain the appointment of *guardian of his minority*.

It is something singular that Mr. Belfham should praise both *Nundcomar* and *Mahomed Reza Cawn*, though the former directly affirmed, in that letter which Mr. Francis delivered to the Board, that Mahomed Reza Cawn had defrauded the Company of more than *three millions* sterling, and had totally ruined the country. Mr. Belfham him-  
self



self adopts an opinion, which inevitably leads, though unknown to him, to that conclusion in its utmost extent, in his first volume, where he inserts a long narrative, to prove the miseries brought upon Bengal under the governments of Lord Clive, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Cartier—a period of seven years, during the whole of which time Mahomed Reza Cawn possessed absolute authority in all revenue concerns, and over the lives of ten millions of people ; he was supposed to have accumulated enormous wealth. Mr. Hastings was to be both his ostensible *accuser* and *judge* ; for Mahomed Reza Cawn was not tried in *any court*, but by Mr. Hastings himself and his Council. The person he was directed to employ, in order to collect evidence, was the avowed and bitter enemy of Mahomed Reza Cawn, Nundcomar himself. The Directors, at the time they issued the order to employ this man, said that they were aware of his bad character ; but as Mr. Hastings knew him so well, they confided in him, to give Nundcomar no more influence than was necessary for the purpose of bringing Mahomed Reza Cawn to justice.

When the enquiry was closed, Mr. Hastings wrote a letter to the Directors, which is worthy the perusal of any Gentleman who wishes to form a true opinion of this extraordinary case. I have selected the following passages from it ; but the entire

tire letter is entered in the 997th page of the Minutes of Evidence on the Trial of Mr. Hastings.

“ You will be pleased to recollect that the charge  
 “ was *general*, without any specification of *time*,  
 “ *place*, or *persons*. I had neither *witnesses*, nor  
 “ *vouchers*, nor *materials* of any sort to begin  
 “ with : for these I relied chiefly on the *abilities*,  
 “ *abilities*, and *active malignity* of *Maha Raja*  
 “ *Nundcomar*, but not resting wholly on his aid,  
 “ I took such other precautions as were most likely  
 “ to produce informations against Mahomed Reza  
 “ Cawn, if his conduct had *really* merited that re-  
 “ turn from the people of this country. In con-  
 “ currence with the Committee of Circuit at Cof-  
 “ sembazar, and with the Council here, I publish-  
 “ ed advertisements, inviting all people to give  
 “ information against such as had contributed to  
 “ the distresses of the country in the time of the  
 “ famine, by the monopoly of grain; or any other  
 “ unfair practice on the wants and necessities of  
 “ the people. I allowed all who had any thing  
 “ to offer on these subjects, to have access to me ;  
 “ and although I had never much time to spare, I  
 “ patiently bestowed many hours, and even days  
 “ of it, in addition to the multiplied, but indefi-  
 “ nite suggestions of Nundcomar. In a word, I  
 “ omitted no means, which were consistent with  
 “ my character, to bring the truth of this accusa-  
 “ to light.

“ In

“ In the course of the enquiry, I proceeded with  
 “ the most rigid impartiality, not suffering, I can  
 “ safely say, the smallest bias to incline me. You  
 “ will see with *what materials I was furnished*. I am  
 “ sorry to say, that some were collected with so  
 “ little *decency*, and *regard to truth*, as to make me  
 “ apprehensive of the effects which they might have  
 “ produced on my character, had I not, in my own  
 “ immediate conduct, invariably adhered to the  
 “ strictest rules of justice. My judgment was formed  
 “ with the same temper of mind, and I continue  
 “ in the persuasion that it will be found perfectly  
 “ consistent with the evidence before me, which it  
 “ cost me much labour and attention, in the midst  
 “ of continued interruption, to collect from the  
 “ records of near thirty different examinations.”

“ Notwithstanding the consciousness which I  
 “ possess of my own integrity, and the certainty  
 “ that my conduct throughout this ungrateful bu-  
 “ siness will, on the most rigid scrutiny, do me  
 “ credit, yet I am not without my fears. I am  
 “ aware of the violent prejudices, which were  
 “ taken up at once against Mahomed Reza Cawn  
 “ by all ranks of people, both here and at home ;  
 “ and am also aware, that in England, where the  
 “ very name of enquiry flatters the passions, and  
 “ raises expectations of great and important de-  
 “ tections, the result may baffle those expectations,  
 “ and turn the torrent of political clamour another

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way,



“ way. In many of the private letters which I received from my friends in England, I was warned to act with the greatest caution in this enquiry, as the confirmation of my credit with the Public, and, forgive me for adding, with your Honourable Court, depended upon it.”

“ The magnitude of the charges alledged against Mahomed Reza Cawn, his reputed wealth, and the means which that afforded him, both of suppressing evidence, and even of influencing his judges in his favour, and *the natural conclusion deducible from so many exaggerated accusations, that some part of them at least was true*, gave additional force to these cautionary intimations, and made me fear for the consequences; not only as they might affect my reputation, which it has been the study of my life to maintain unblemished, but as they might blast all my hopes from the continuance of your favour, which I hold solely on the credit of my integrity.”

Let any Gentleman compare the preceding relation, which is taken from the most authentic materials, with the following statement by Mr. Belsham. After giving an account of the trial and execution of Nundcomar, he thus proceeds :

\* “ The conduct of the Governor General, in relation to Mahomed Reza Cawn, a Mufful-

\* Vol. III. page 87 and 8.

“ man

“ man of the highest distinction, was scarcely less  
 “ extraordinary ; though to develop the secret  
 “ motives which led to it, would open a scene of  
 “ dark and complex intrigue, totally foreign to the  
 “ purposes of *general history*. This distinguished  
 “ personage was, through the influence of the  
 “ English government, on the decease of the late  
 “ Nabob, Meer Jaffier Ally Cawn, constituted  
 “ Guardian of his children, and Administrator or  
 “ Regent of the Subadhary, during the minority  
 “ of his son, Nudjebul Dowlah. As to his ge-  
 “ neral character, the late President, Lord Clive,  
 “ in his letter to the Supreme Council of July 3d,  
 “ 1766, says, it is with pleasure I acquaint you,  
 “ that the more I see of Mahomed Reza Cawn,  
 “ the stronger is my conviction of his honour and  
 “ moderation. Also the President and Council, in  
 “ their dispatch to the Court of Directors, June  
 “ 1767, say, Mahomed Reza Cawn has pursued  
 “ the Company’s interest with steadiness and dili-  
 “ gence. His abilities qualify him to perform the  
 “ most important services : and the Court of Di-  
 “ rectors, in their letter of February 1768, say,

“ We must, in justice to Mahomed Reza Cawn,  
 “ express the high sense we entertain of his abili-  
 “ ties, and of the indefatigable attention he has  
 “ shewn in the execution of the trust reposed in  
 “ him. Nevertheless the cabals of his enemies  
 “ after a time so far prevailed, that the Court of

“ Directors transmitted orders to deprive Mahomed Reza Cawn of his office, and to institute an enquiry into his conduct. In conformity to his secret instructions, Mr. Hastings caused this Minister to be arrested in the city of Moorsheda-  
 bad, and to be brought down to Calcutta, where he was, *by various artifices of delay, kept in prison for two years.* At length, being brought to trial, he was completely and honourably acquitted of the charges brought against him.”

By whom were those *artifices of delay practised* of which Mr. Belsham speaks? Not by Mr. Hastings, but by Nundcomar. Never was so entire, nor so dangerous a power entrusted to an individual as to Mr. Hastings. He was to displace a Minister who had enjoyed a salary of more than one hundred thousand pounds a year for seven years, and absolute power over the persons and properties of ten millions of people; a man who was supposed to have defrauded the Company to an immense amount, and to have aggravated the horrors of a general famine. By whom were these suspicions of Mahomed Reza Cawn infused into the minds of the Directors? By Nundcomar—by Colonel Dow—by Mr. Bolts—by Mr. Holwell—by Mr. James Macpherson, and by a variety of other persons.—Strange indeed has been the fate of Mr. Hastings!!! By Nundcomar, Mr. Hastings was accused of acquitting Mahomed Reza Cawn, for a bribe  
 of



of ten lacks of rupees. By Mr. Belfham he is accused of having most cruelly *oppressed* Mahomed Reza Cawn, although the *same Mr. Belfham* has, in his *first volume*, charged Mahomed Reza Cawn as the author of the famine of 1770, and as the cause of all those miseries which *he* supposes were brought upon Bengal between the years 1765 and 1772!!! By the *same Mr. Belfham*, who, in his *third volume*, gives Mahomed Reza Cawn a very high character—a character which I believe he well deserved. The error which Mahomed Reza Cawn committed was, in over stating the value of the Bengal revenues to Lord Clive in the year 1765 : but, except he had been a very rapacious man indeed, his appointments were so large, as to preclude him from even a wish to increase his fortune by speculation. Suppose Mr. Belfham had been a Director in the year 1771, and suppose him to entertain *the opinions* which are to be found in his *first volume*, he must have joined in a vote for dismissing Mahomed Reza Cawn, and in another vote for bringing him to a public trial. Yet so *charitable* is this Gentleman, that he imputes the conduct of the Directors to intrigue, and to the prevalence of the Sullivan party over that of Lord Clive. But by whatever motives the Directors were actuated, Mr. Hastings was no party to the business; he received orders of a most delicate and important nature, which it was his duty

to

to obey. He was to procure information against a public Minister, through the agency of the most abandoned of mankind, and then he was to sit *as a judge*, and to acquit or condemn that public Minister, upon information so procured. He was to *conceal* the orders that he received, and to sustain the *odium* of apparently taking into his confidence a man for whom he was known to entertain the most unfavourable opinion, and whose treachery to the Company he had himself detected in the year 1762.

To those who read and believe Mr. Belfham, it must appear indeed extraordinary, that Mr. Hastings, when speaking of Mahomed Reza Cawn, in the late House of Commons, should have said, "I am sure his sentiments for me are those of gratitude and affection." To all who know the transactions, Mahomed Reza Cawn must indeed have appeared the most base and ungrateful of men if he had not entertained and expressed, as he often did, the warmest sentiments of respect, gratitude, and affection for Mr. Hastings.

In reply to Mr. Belfham's remarks on the Maratta war, \* all I shall say is, that it has been proved beyond all possibility of doubt or cavil, that the war was a measure of the King's Ministers and the Court of Directors: the merit of the

\* Page 90 to 119.

peace belonged solely to Mr. Hastings, and by that peace he laid the foundation of the confederacy which Lord Cornwallis so successfully formed against Tippoo Sultaun. If Mr. Belsham had read (which I am sure he never has) any authentic history of the Maratta war, he would have seen that no man more strongly disapproved of it in its origin, than Mr. Hastings; that when *he* became a party to it, he was justified by the clear and decisive orders of the Court of Directors; and that in the war he had one, and only one object—to counteract the designs formed by France, for the destruction of the British power in India. Of the nature of those designs, the period when they were formed, the manner in which they would be put into execution, Mr. Hastings was fully informed, through the medium of the King's Ambassador at Paris, the present Earl of Mansfield; and if Mr. Belsham had ever read the strong, clear, and decisive evidence which that Nobleman delivered in Westminster Hall upon this point, he would have known that Mr. Hastings needed no further justification for the part which he took in the Maratta war.

The next point which Mr. Belsham takes up, is the story of Cheyt Sing. As this case formed one of the articles on which Mr. Hastings was tried and acquitted, it would be idle and indecent to go into the merits of the cause. I shall therefore



therefore follow the rule I adopted, relative to the Presents, and merely shew how grossly ignorant or prejudiced Mr. Belsham has been.

After giving his own account of the rise of the Maratta war, and its progress to the year 1780, he says, “the Bengal government soon found itself  
“reduced to the extremest necessity for money  
“to defray the enormous expences of its complex  
“and extended operations. Rolling his baleful  
“eyes around, the Governor General at length  
“fixed them on Benares.

After stating the measures by which Cheyt Sing became our subject, he again says—“In the year  
“1777, the Rajah had the mortification to give  
“great and mortal offence to the Governor General—an offence, however, unintentional, for  
“which his final ruin only could atone.”

Mr. Belsham narrates the nature of the transaction, which appeared to give such high offence to Mr. Hastings, namely that Cheyt Sing sent a Vakil to compliment General Clavering on his supposed accession to the government, and he proceeds as follows:—“The affront thus offered to  
“him appears to have rankled in his proud and  
“malignant mind, till he found a fit opportunity  
“for gratifying his dire revenge. Conscious of  
“his unlimited and uncontrollable power, the Governor General proposed in Council, July 9th,  
“1778, (Sir John Clavering being now deceased)  
“that

“ that the Rajah of Benares should consent to the  
 “ establishment of three battalions of Sepoys, to  
 “ be raised at his own expence.”

In the preceding passages, if Mr. Belsham has not exactly copied the words contained in the charge delivered by Mr. Burke to the late House of Commons, he has certainly done it very nearly, and has preserved all the malignity and falsehood of the charge. The following reply, made by Mr. Pitt to this part of the Benares charge, is equally applicable to Mr. Belsham.

“ The second part of the charge was intitled,  
 “ Designs of Mr. Hastings to ruin the Rajah of  
 “ Benares ; and it was stated in the charge, that  
 “ as soon as Mr. Hastings found himself in a  
 “ majority at the Council, by the deaths of General Clavering and Colonel Monson, he suddenly made use of his power to enforce the  
 “ demand of an extraordinary subsidy from Cheyt Sing, in order to furnish himself with the means  
 “ of wreaking his vengeance on that Prince. He  
 “ desired the House to pause for a moment, and  
 “ to consider the full force of the insinuation contained in these words. Could there be a more  
 “ malignant charge brought against a man than  
 “ that which he had just stated ? Was it not of  
 “ such a nature, that all hearing it, must necessarily conclude, that it was the intention of the  
 O “ accuser

“ accuser to impress the minds of men with an  
 “ opinion that this act of Mr. Hastings was the  
 “ effect of a wanton and deliberate malice, long  
 “ bent on an act of cruelty and injustice, to which  
 “ he gave vent on the very first opportunity.  
 “ He should not lay any stress on the circum-  
 “ stance of Mr. Hastings having been in posses-  
 “ sion of a majority in the Council from the death  
 “ of Colonel Monson, which happened long be-  
 “ fore : all which would be necessary for him to  
 “ remind the Committee of, as a complete anti-  
 “ dote to every unfavourable impression which  
 “ the unwarrantable acrimony of the charge might  
 “ have given rise to, was, that two days before  
 “ the resolution for exacting the five lacks of ru-  
 “ pees from Cheyt Sing had been proposed in the  
 “ Council, Mr. Hastings had received an account  
 “ of the breaking out of the French war. To  
 “ have passed over such a circumstance as this, so  
 “ striking and so obvious, and to discover a motive  
 “ so base and diabolical as that which he had  
 “ imputed to Mr. Hastings, could only be ac-  
 “ counted for on principles extremely injurious to  
 “ the candour and integrity of the Honourable  
 “ Gentleman, or else by supposing that the labo-  
 “ rious and pertinacious attention which distin-  
 “ guished his conduct in every other part of this  
 “ proceeding was, in the present instance, more  
 “ unfortu-



“ unfortunately for himself than for Mr. Hastings, somewhat off his guard.”\*

An historian acts most unpardonably, who represents any circumstance falsely, and he is still more culpable if the circumstance involves either the national character or the reputation of an individual.

It is true, as Mr. Belsham states, that on the 9th of July 1778, Mr. Hastings proposed, that Cheyt Sing should be required to furnish military aid to the Company. It is also true, *which Mr. Belsham does not state*, that this was one of a great variety of measures proposed by Mr. Hastings, on the 9th of July 1778, in consequence of the news received *two days before*, of war having been declared between Great Britain and France. Is there any distinction in this instance to be drawn between Mr. Belsham and Mr. Burke?

Mr. Belsham has even ventured to go one step beyond Mr. Burke in misrepresentation. He says, that the demand of military aid was vigorously opposed by Mr. Francis and Mr. Wheeler. This is not the fact. The demand was agreed to, and passed *unanimously*. The Rajah promised obedience, afterwards demurred, and in consequence *of that demur*, Mr. Hastings proposed to adopt strong measures. *Then* it was, and not *before*, that

\* Debrett's Debates, June 7th, 1786.

Mr. Francis and Mr. Wheler differed in opinion. I am sure there is no statesman, nor any man of sound judgment, who can discover any thing like common sense in any part of Mr. Francis's conduct throughout the Benares business. In July 1778, Mr. Hastings proposed to increase the army very considerably, to equip a marine force for the defence of the Bay of Bengal, to complete the works of Fort William, to embody the Militia, to send a supply of treasure to Madras, and to advise the immediate siege of Pondicherry, to take all the French settlements in Bengal, and the ships in the river. Amongst the variety of resolutions was, one to require from Cheyt Sing to bear his proportion of the additional expence which would be incurred by the war. The motion passed *unanimously*, though Mr. Francis *in conversation* expressed *some doubts* as to our right to make the demand. These doubts Mr. Hastings treated with the respect which was due to any thing said by one of his colleagues; and he *recorded* it as *his opinion*, that we possessed the right inherent in every government, of calling upon its subjects for extraordinary aids, on extraordinary emergencies, and that we were not precluded from exercising that right by any agreements between the East India Company and Cheyt Sing.

In 1779, the demand was again renewed; again it passed *unanimously*; Cheyt Sing again demurred,  
and

and Mr. Francis opposed the measures which Mr. Hastings preferred to enforce the demand.

In 1780, the demand was again repeated ; again it passed *unanimously* ; again Cheyt Sing demurred. Mr. Hastings then proposed to fine him ten thousand pounds. Mr. Francis said, " I acquiesce, though I hope the threat will be sufficient," as in truth it was, for the fine never was levied : yet Mr. Belsham has the boldness to assert, that " the Governor General, *of his own authority*, imposed upon him an additional fine or " mulct of ten thousand pounds."

The distinction between Mr. Hastings and Mr. Francis, throughout all this business of Cheyt Sing, is perfectly clear. The former entertained no doubts as to the right of the British government to demand military aid from Cheyt Sing in war, consequently the conduct of the Rajah appeared highly contumacious to him. Mr. Francis did entertain doubts as to the right, and steered *a middle course*. He agreed to the demands, but objected to every measure proposed in the two first years for enforcing the demands. In the third year he wholly concurred. To a man of common sense it must be clear, that if the demands were unjust, Mr. Francis ought never to have given his consent to them. If founded in justice, the resistance of Cheyt Sing was culpable.

I shall not pursue this subject further. The whole



whole Benares story, as related by Mr. Belfham, is taken from the charge originally presented by Mr. Burke to the late House of Commons : every syllable of it has been fully disproved in Westminster Hall.

Mr. Belfham next proceeds to the Begums of Oude. Here he observes, \* “ It must suffice, for “ this is not a professed history of the adminis-  
“ tion of Mr. Hastings, to touch upon a few  
“ leading points of this two fertile topic.”

Mr. Belfham could not undoubtedly be expected to give a complete history of the administration of Mr. Hastings ; but, however *short* his account, it ought, as far as it did go, to be *true*. This subject of the Begum having also undergone a most minute investigation, which has ended so honourably for Mr. Hastings, I shall content myself by barely exposing the misrepresentations of Mr. Belfham.

After mistating every circumstance, without exception, of the history of Oude, confounding dates, and garbling letters, he says ; † “ But the heart of  
“ Mr. Hastings never, in any instance, counteract-  
“ ed the designs of his head, and the wretched  
“ inhabitants of Oude were destined to see yet  
“ greater abominations than these.

\* Vol. III. page 137.

† Vol. III. page 143.

“ The mother and wife of the late Nabob kept  
 “ their court at the city of Fyzabad, where, after  
 “ the custom of the East, they lived in much mag-  
 “ nificence, having the charge of educating the  
 “ numerous offspring of the deceased Sovereign,  
 “ and of maintaing a household, consisting of two  
 “ thousand persons. To support this vast expence,  
 “ the Nabob had left them a large proportion of  
 “ his treasures, and had settled upon them *Jaghires*  
 “ suitable to their high rank and dignity, and to the  
 “ importance of the trust committed to them.”

Mr. Belsham may quote authorities for the pre-  
 ceding assertions. But where those authorities can-  
 not justify an historian for inserting a passage  
 directly contrary to truth in every line of it, it will  
 be no defence to Mr. Belsham to say, that Mr.  
 Sheridan and Mr. Burke had misled him. Those  
 gentlemen were Members of Parliament, orators,  
 and impassioned in the cause they had undertaken.  
 I have a right therefore to say, that any historian  
 who credits Mr. Sheridan or Mr. Burke, on a sub-  
 ject submitted to examination before a Court of  
 Justice, must be a mere tool of a party. Each as-  
 sertion in the passage that I have quoted has been  
 proved to be false. The Begums had not the charge  
 of educating the numerous offspring of Sujah  
 Dowlah. One of these Begums was the mother ; the  
 other the wife of Sujah Dowlah. The latter had  
 but one son, the present Nabob ; she hated and  
 detested,

detested, as was extremely natural, the illegitimate offspring of her husband, and never did trouble herself about them. The old Begum, the mother of Sujah Dowlah, was a woman of a high and an imperious spirit. She had a moderate settlement made upon her in the life-time of her own husband, the father of Sujah Dowlah. Her son left her no power, but she struggled hard to obtain power in the year 1778, and was disappointed.

It is not true that the two Begums, or either of them, had the charge of maintaining a household consisting of two thousand persons, or that they had any concern with them. To support these persons, whose numbers are greatly exaggerated, the present Nabob allowed the sum of forty thousand rupees, or four thousand pounds sterling a year, which Major Gilpin said was fully sufficient, provided it had been regularly paid.

It is not true that to support this vast expence, the Nabob left the Begum a vast proportion of his treasures. The fact is, that he died without a will; or if any will was made, the Begum secreted it.

It is not true that Sujah Dowlah settled Jaghires upon the Begums suitable to their high rank and dignity, and to the importance of the trust committed to them. The Jaghires were settled by the present Nabob, on whom his father left the two Begums,



Begums, his concubines, his children, and his empire entirely dependent.

It may seem strange to Mr. Belsham, yet I assure him it is true, that though the passage which he has quoted is inserted almost verbatim in Mr. Burke's charges—though Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan had the boldness to maintain the truth of it in Westminster Hall, they *themselves* produced the evidence, which fully disproved every line of it. Is this an example for an historian to follow?

I have given one specimen of Mr. Belsham's accuracy, and shall stop here. The remainder of his narrative is taken either from the charges delivered by Mr. Burke, or from the speeches of Mr. Sheridan, which, however amusing at the time, are now consigned to oblivion.

In the close of his history of the administration of Mr. Hastings, Mr. Belsham says, "The Governor perceiving his influence in the Council lost, knowing his reputation at home to be greatly in the wane, and fearing most probably a disgraceful dismissal, now thought it expedient to resign the government. On his arrival in England, he was, after a long previous investigation of his numerous delinquencies, most deservedly impeached at the Bar of the House of Lords, by the Commons of Great Britain, of high crimes and misdemeanours, in the execution of his office."

This passage contains two assertions, which are directly opposite to fact, and affords additional proof that there is no man in the kingdom less qualified for the task of an historian than Mr. Belsham.

In the month of February 1783, Mr. Hastings wrote to the Court of Directors, that as the scene of warfare in which they had been so long engaged, appeared to be drawing to a close, it was his firm determination to quit India as soon as he had allowed a sufficient time for the arrival of his successor, and he desired that a successor might be immediately appointed. It was at that time his intention to have left Bengal early in 1784; but the earnest and pressing solicitations of the Nabob of Oude induced him to remain one year longer, and to proceed to Oude, where he formed an arrangement with the Nabob, which was highly approved of in England, and is continued with very little variation at this moment.

In September 1784, he heard of the defeat of Mr. Fox's bill, and received the strongest assurances from England, that it was the intention of the succeeding Ministers to afford him the fullest support. These assurances had no effect—peace was restored to India; and on the 1st of February 1785, *two years* from the time that he had written for a successor, he quitted Bengal, leaving the government in charge of the senior member of Council, Sir John Macpherson, until his successor should

should arrive.—On the 17th of February 1785, the Directors did comply with his request, expressly stating that the successor was appointed *in consequence of his own desire*. At the same time, the Directors unanimously transmitted to him their thanks for his long, able, and faithful services. Still further to mark their respect for him, they left the time of his quitting the government to himself, in any ship that should sail in the following season; but these arrangements became unnecessary, as Mr. Hastings had left Bengal seventeen days before the Directors nominated a successor in England. If Mr. Fox's bill had passed, Mr. Hastings undoubtedly might have expected a disgraceful dismissal. To have added more than two millions sterling a year to the public revenues, to have preserved India against the powerful combinations formed for its destruction, and to be beloved and respected both by the natives and the British subjects whom he had presided over so long, would, I am sure, have had no influence in Mr. Fox's determination, while he was blindly led, by a man so wild, and so malignant as Mr. Burke. If, therefore, the resignation of Mr. Hastings had taken place in the summer of 1784, Mr. Belsham might have ascribed it with some degree of reason, to the dread of a disgraceful dismissal: but if Mr. Belsham attended to dates, or if he knew any thing of the subject on which he writes with so



much confidence, it would be needless to inform him, that the failure of Mr. Fox's bill was known in Bengal in the month of August 1784.

His second assertion is equally void of foundation.

Mr. Hastings arrived in London on the 7th of June 1785, and was received with the most flattering marks of distinction, both by his Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Directors.

The idea of an impeachment could hardly, at that time have entered into the head of any human being. Mr. Burke, it is true, did give notice that he meant in the following Session, to institute an enquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings; and it is my firm belief, from what I have since heard, that the subject would have been at rest for ever, if Mr. Hastings had thought it consistent with his character to pass by this notice without observation. When the Parliament met in January 1786, I asked Mr. Burke, at the desire of Mr. Hastings, whether he meant to carry his intention into effect, or to abandon it. He replied, that he should follow the example of the Duke of Parma, and not communicate his plans to an enemy. Mr. Fox was more open. He affirmed, that if Mr. Burke abandoned the design, others would take it up. Subsequent to this conversation, in Parliamenv, a meeting of the Portland party, was held at Burlington house, where

where the question was fully discussed, and it was at length determined that Mr. Burke should be supported, though many disliked the prosecution, and amongst the rest the late Earl of Guilford. This business therefore commenced, as I presume former impeachments have commenced, merely upon party principles. The Tories impeached the Earl of Portland, Lords Halifax and Orford, in the reign of King William. The Whigs impeached Lord Oxford, in the reign of George the First, and at both times the plan was settled, undoubtedly as in the late impeachment, prior to its being proposed in Parliament.

If Mr. Belsham at all knew how the proceedings were carried on, he would hardly venture to state, as he has done, that “after a *long previous examination of his numerous delinquencies*, Mr. Hastings was deservedly impeached.” That the moment the House of Commons saw ground for accusation, they determined to accuse, would have been proper enough, if Mr. Belsham had so stated it; but it can arise from a prejudice as rancorous as Mr. Belsham describes Mr. Burke’s to be, to put it in the malignant and fallacious manner that he has done. It was repeatedly observed by Lord Thurlow, and Lord Loughborough too, that the accusations in various instances were so unfounded, so directly opposite to fact, that it was morally impossible so great a body as the House of Commons

mons could have voted them, had they previously considered them. These judges did not blame the House nor the Managers for preferring such unfounded accusations, but imputed them either to the ignorance, or the too forward zeal of the agents they employed. They well knew that the House of Commons had only determined the great question of impeachment in the first instance, that the remainder was a matter of detail which in the nature of things must be confided to other hands. As the articles preferred against Mr. Hastings are precisely in the style, and in many instances, even in the words of Mr. Belsham's History, I must say, that at least the agents were as credulous, and as uninformed as Mr. Belsham himself.

As I do not chuse to follow the example of Mr. Belsham, who hazards the strongest assertions without proof, I shall concisely state of what nature that proceeding was, which Mr. Belsham calls a long previous examination "of the numerous crimes and delinquencies of Mr. Hastings."

On the 11th of February 1786, Mr. Burke commenced the attack. Between that day and the 6th of April, the debates were exceedingly violent, and the majority concurred with Mr. Pitt in completely justifying Mr. Hastings upon various points relative to the Maratta war, the negotiations



tions with the Mogul, and upon other subjects which Mr. Belsham has deemed highly reprehensible. All the acrimony and violence of party was displayed, and Mr. Pitt was directly accused of a determination to screen Mr. Hastings from punishment.

On the 4th of April and the succeeding days, Mr. Burke pretended his Charges, twenty-two in number. On eight of these only a separate question was put, and all the rest were abandoned. If Mr. Belsham does not know the nature of each question, I shall tell him what it was. That in a charge, Benares for instance, there was contained matter for impeachment. When these eight questions had been carried, the Charges were referred to a Committee, who framed them into twenty articles of impeachment. These were voted by the House without the examination of a single moment. A debate arose on the 9th of May, whether the first six should be received then, or that day six months : in other words, whether Mr. Hastings should, or should not, be impeached. The question was carried by one hundred and seventy-seven against ninety-one, that they should *then* be read, and the impeachment was voted the next day. The seventh article passed without any remark, though Mr. Pitt had violently opposed it when first brought forward, and the remaining thirteen articles were voted before they were printed, consequently no one Member, the  
Committee

Committee excepted, ever read a line of them. From this plain relation it is clear, that Mr. Belsham is totally mistaken, when he says that Mr. Hastings was impeached after a long previous examination. I do not wish to dwell longer upon this subject, nor do I mean to cast a reflection upon the last House of Commons, or upon any individual Member of it, but to expose the ignorance, and prejudice of the historian.

Mr. Belsham concludes his narrative of Bengal transactions, by giving a character of Mr. Hastings. It is perfectly true, as Mr. Belsham says, that Mr. Hastings “was daring in the conception, and  
“ardent in the prosecution of his designs; fertile  
“in resources, and relying with confidence, and  
“even with pride in the strength of his own genius.” In every other particular, the character is unjust in the highest degree. Its injustice can be fully proved by an appeal to facts of general notoriety; and the true way to refute Mr. Belsham will be, to shew in what situation Bengal was when Mr. Hastings succeeded to the government in April 1772—in what situation he left it in February 1785, and what difficulties he had to encounter during his administration. In April 1772, the total annual resources of Bengal scarcely exceeded three millions sterling, and the income balanced the expenditure.

Such is the account which Mr. Belsham himself gives.—In 1785, the total annual resources were  
five

five millions five hundred thousand pounds; and the foreign connections of Bengal, instead of being a clog upon the Company, as they had been prior to his government, were a source of infinite advantage. From 1774 to 1776, he had to encounter a decided opposition; and from 1783 to 1786, he experienced every degree of opposition in England, though he was continued by successive re-appointments in the government of Bengal. The American war involved us with France, Spain, and Holland, and the most powerful efforts were made by France to regain the consequence she once possessed in India. These efforts were successfully opposed by Mr. Hastings; and at the close of a war, unexampled either for public calamities, or the loss of empire by Great Britain, peace was restored to India without the loss of territory: on the contrary, the British Minister, Lord Lansdowne, was enabled to preserve two valuable islands in the West Indies, by restoring to France the settlements which we had wrested from her in India during the war. Such was the *result* of Mr. Hastings's administration, which fully entitled him to the name bestowed upon by him Mr. Pitt, who called him, "The Saviour of India," and justified those also who have denominated him, "The Chatham of the East." Mr. Belsham, in giving *his* character of Mr. Hastings says, that for "thirteen years he was the scourge of the East." Shall we credit



Mr. Bellham, a private Gentleman, living in the inland town of Bedford, or the persons who were subject to so severe a scourge for so many years?

On the departure of Mr. Hastings from Bengal, the army, the gentlemen in the civil service, and the British inhabitants of Calcutta, gave the most unequivocal proofs of their sense of his public services, and private character.

While his trial was depending, the natives of every description in Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, Benares, Oude, and Furruckabad, requested Lord Cornwallis to transmit to England testimonials expressive of their sense of his conduct to them.

The acquittal has been received throughout India with universal satisfaction and pleasure; congratulatory letters have been sent to Mr. Hastings from all quarters.

A man has governed India for thirteen years, greatly to the advantage of the Public, and to the general satisfaction of the governed. These facts are proved by what to most men would appear incontrovertible evidence: but Mr. Bellham opposes to it the ipse dixit of Mr. Francis, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Sheridan, three Gentlemen so prejudiced, that no fair man ought to believe any thing that they have said, and not proved. He ought equally to distrust me. I do not ask him to credit me in any assertion that I have made, which is not established by undoubted evidence.

Speaking

Speaking of the defence of Mr. Hastings before the House of Commons, Mr. Belsham says, " Though his assertions were bold, his arguments were weak, and the language of his defence was beyond all example boastful and arrogant. He had even the weakness and presumption to call in question the authority of the House to institute a judicial enquiry into his conduct."

Something like this was also said by Mr. Burke. I do not believe, however, that there is a public man in England, to whom the terms, presumption and arrogance, can be applied with less justice than to Mr. Hastings.

I suppose Mr. Belsham alludes, as Mr. Burke did, to the following passages :

" I persisted in the formation and prosecution of every measure, which the emergency of the service rendered necessary in my judgment, and had the conscious triumph of seeing them all invariably terminate in their designed objects : nor did I resign my charge, until I had fulfilled every duty which required my continuance in it ; and I resigned it in a state of established peace and security, with all the sources of its abundance unimpaired, and even improved, notwithstanding the vast drains which were made of its treasures, and the multiplied diversions of its strength, in the support of the dependent and remote possessions of the Company, and in

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“ the maintenance of their wars, and of wars in  
 “ which the Company were involved by the policy  
 “ of Great Britain. I parted from the scene of  
 “ my public life with the expressed regrets of my  
 “ fellow servants and countrymen ; which were  
 “ followed by a like declaration from all the offi-  
 “ cers of the army who had served during my ad-  
 “ ministration ; and on my return to my own  
 “ country, I was received by the Court of Di-  
 “ rectors, my immediate masters, with their thanks ;  
 “ and I gratefully remember the Chairman’s em-  
 “ phatical pause on the epithet which was joined  
 “ to them, their *unanimous thanks*, for my services ;  
 “ with a notification of those which had been some-  
 “ time before bestowed on me by the votes of  
 “ the Proprietors, my honoured employers, which  
 “ were not the less acceptable for their consistency  
 “ with the uniform tenor of their sentiments  
 “ and conduct respecting me through the whole  
 “ course of my administration. If this Honourable  
 “ House is desirous of knowing in what estimation  
 “ I stood with the Princes and Rulers of India,  
 “ and with the subjects of our own dominion, the  
 “ opinions of both may be easily obtained, by en-  
 “ quiry of the witnesses whom my prosecutor has  
 “ called to establish his charges against me.”

“ Though I might have thought myself entitled  
 “ by my services to a different reception, and my  
 “ body and mind worn down by the labours of  
 “ thirty-



“ thirty-five years, to an interval of repose ; and  
 “ though I might erroneously imagine that no  
 “ power upon earth had a right to impeach me for  
 “ the exercise of a trust which those for whom I  
 “ held it had repeatedly declared, and in the most  
 “ authentic terms, that I had discharged to their  
 “ benefit and entire satisfaction ; yet I was glad to  
 “ see some substantial ground on which I could  
 “ build my hopes of a speedy trial and definite  
 “ termination.”

“ Under such circumstances, I humbly apprehend,  
 “ that since it is not, as I have said, the lot of hu-  
 “ man nature to be exempt from error, some notori-  
 “ ous calamity, affecting the interests of which I had  
 “ charge, or some well-ascertained ground of cor-  
 “ ruption, or other moral deviation from my duty,  
 “ the loss of national reputation, or of substantial  
 “ property, ought to have appeared, before I be-  
 “ came the subject of a parliamentary impeach-  
 “ ment. But what losses has the nation sustained  
 “ through my mismanagement ? Have provinces  
 “ been dismembered from it ? Have its armies been  
 “ defeated in operations of my formation ? Or war  
 “ or famine wasted the countries of my jurisdic-  
 “ tion ?—No : the reverse has been the attendant  
 “ of my fortune in every stage of it ; and so little  
 “ ground have I afforded, from the notoriety of  
 “ my character, for such an inquisition into it, that  
 “ I dare affirm that I stand, even at this hour  
 “ (notwith-

“ (notwithstanding the prejudices excited against  
 “ me) as high in the estimation of the world, I  
 “ mean not to confine the assertion to this king-  
 “ dom alone, as any man of my own rank and pre-  
 “ tensions in it.”

These quotations are taken from different parts of the introduction to the defence. Can Mr. Belsham venture to deny the truth of the assertions, or will he wonder that a man, who had performed such services, should have felt rather indignant when he replied, not to charges preferred by the House of Commons, but by an individual, acting at that moment in concert with a late Minister, whom but a few years before he had publicly threatened with impeachment.

Mr. Belsham has given a character of Mr. Hastings, which has no sort of resemblance to the original. I will attempt to delineate a character; and I trust I shall pay more regard to facts than Mr. Belsham has done. The gentleman to whom I allude is the hero of Mr. Belsham's History. He quotes him as if he were an oracle: he is “ a sagacious counsellor, a distinguished politi-  
 “ cian, patriot, and friend to mankind.”

Mr. Burke has gone even further. He has described Mr. Francis as a man “ from whom they  
 “ have all learnt their lessons, if they have learnt  
 “ any good ones.” Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Wyndham, have been almost as profuse in his  
 praise.

praise. Mr. Dundas, I well remember, did once in the House express his astonishment, at the want of information on the part of Mr. Francis, on points which he ought to have known.

The following account of Mr. Francis may be of use to some future historian, because it may lead him to make some further enquiry ; for I believe Mr. Belfham is the only man aspiring to the title of an historian, who copies verbatim, as matters of fact, any assertion that squares with his political prejudices, which he can pick up from a speech, or a pamphlet.

Mr. Francis had been employed as a Clerk in the Secretary of State's Office, and the War Office, In the year 1757, he was Secretary to General Bligh during the expedition to the coast of France in that year. That he filled all these stations with the ability requisite to discharge the duties of them, I have no doubt. In the year 1773, chance in the first instance, and the friendship of Lord Mendip, (then Mr. Welbore Ellis) placed him in a situation of high eminence and importance.

When Lord North's Regulating Bill was depending, and he had fixed upon Mr. Hastings as the new Governor General ; and on Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Barwell, as Supreme Counsellors, his Lordship offered the youngest seat at the Board to Mr. Dempster and to Mr. Gregory.



Gregory. Both these gentlemen declined the appointment, and then Mr. Francis was proposed.

From the habits of his life to this period, he could have had no other knowledge of India, than that which every man of a liberal education and common curiosity, might be supposed to possess.

In October 1774, he landed in Calcutta, and at the second meeting of the Council, an opposition commenced, which continued with unabated violence for many years.

Messrs. Clavering, Monson, and Francis, formed the majority; and Mr. Francis was unquestionably the writer of the Letters of Appeal on the one side, as Mr. Hastings was of the other.

The first ground of attack by Mr. Francis was, the system of government formed by Mr. Hastings, as connected with the neighbouring States, by which, as Mr. Francis predicted, Bengal would be involved in ruinous expence. The next was, for the system formed for collecting the revenues of Bengal, the salt, the opium, &c. In short, nothing could be more gloomy than the pictures drawn by Mr. Francis; and if the letters had not been addressed to men who knew something of their own affairs, he would have sunk their stock as much below its real value in 1775, as the exaggerated representations of Lord Clive had raised it in 1766, above its fair price.

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The last attack he made upon Mr. Hastings was for corruption in the execution of his office.

In the mean time, the current business of government went on—the receipts very considerably exceeded the expenditure; and in the year 1776, the result of all those measures which Mr. Francis so loudly condemned, was this:—The debt existing, when Mr. Hastings came to the government in 1772 was paid off;—the treasury was full, and investments were provided, not by drawing bills upon the Company, or by contracting debts in Bengal, but by the surplus of resources beyond expences,

In 1776, Colonel Monson died, and General Clavering in 1777. Mr. Francis was left single in opposition, until the close of 1777, when Mr. Wheeler arrived,

The great subject of contention between Mr. Hastings and Mr. Francis, after that period, was the Maratta war, in which the former took that line which was attended with very great responsibility; and the latter, that of perfect security, following however, I have no doubt, his own judgment.

Both originally concurred in condemning the Maratta war, though it was a most favourite object with the Directors—so much so, that after the conclusion of the peace of 1776, which may more aptly be termed a truce, the Directors encouraged their governments in India to break it; and in the resolutions moved by Mr. Dundas in 1782, he

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very properly says, that Mr. Hastings acted in conformity to the instructions of the Directors. Why he took the line he did, has been fully cleared up. He gave implicit credit to the information transmittted to him by Lord Stormont, the King's Ambassador at Paris; Mr. Francis did not, and he certainly was right as matters turned out. But to those who attend to the history of that time, it must be known, that the original destination of the fleet with which D'Estaing went to America in May 1778, was India, and the change was effected by the pressing solicitations and abilities of Doctor Franklin. Owing to this change, the great efforts which Lord Stormont had assured Mr. Hastings would be made by France, to overturn the British empire in India, as soon as war should be declared, were not in fact made until the year 1781.

Mr. Francis continued strong in opposition until the month of March 1780, when an agreement took place between him and Mr. Hastings, the terms of which being misunderstood, a duel was the consequence in the summer of that year. In December 1780 Mr. Francis quitted India. From St. Helena he wrote to the Court of Directors, giving them a most lamentable account of the situation of India. In October 1781 he arrived in London, and in November was admitted to a conference with the two Chairmen of the East India Company :



Company : at that conference he delivered his account of the state of India, and it is printed in one of the Reports of the Select Committee. It would certainly be the time not ill spent for any man to read it, and then to ask himself, if in one single instance a prediction of Mr. Francis's has been verified.

From the surplus revenues of Bengal, an investment, as he affirms, can never again be purchased. Oude he describes as utterly and irretrievably ruined ; and a debt of one million four hundred thousand pounds, then due to the Company from the Vizier, he states to be absolutely irrecoverable. Of peace there did not appear to him to be the most distant prospect ; and in truth, those who believed Mr. Francis must have thought our situation in India to have been as desperate as in America, where one army had recently been captured, and another confined to the city of New York.

In the year 1784, Mr. Francis came into Parliament, and held similar language. Of Mr. Hastings he spoke with much more respect than Mr. Belsham does ; disclaimed all personal enmity, affirming that both Mr. Hastings and himself were of too warm tempers to retain resentment ; described him as a man of great abilities undoubtedly, but as one who was apt to write *currente calamo*, and therefore he went through his calculations one by one, disputing the justice of

each as he went on. At this time peace had been concluded with all our enemies in India ; but advice of the peace with Tippoo Sultaun had not arrived. Mr. Hastings had ventured to express an expectation that with him also peace would speedily be made ; that it was not within prospect, Mr. Francis affirmed, though in two months after he spoke, we received an account of its conclusion.

In June 1785, Mr. Hastings arrived in England, having more than performed every promise that he had made. The debt of the Nabob of Oude was completely recovered—the revenues were more productive than they had ever been ; and instead of a surplus of one million sterling, which Mr. Hastings had modestly calculated, or of one million five hundred thousand pounds, which from a dread of being thought too sanguine, I had stated it at, in reply to Mr. Francis, the total expences of Bengal, on a peace establishment, fell short of the receipts above two millions sterling a year.

In 1786, the investigation of Mr. Hastings's conduct began. The active part which Mr. Francis took in that investigation is too well known to need being repeated here. Neither the eloquence of Mr. Fox, nor the Memoirs of Mr. Belsham, will ever persuade the world to approve of his conduct. He may have acted, I dare say, from the best motives ; but the House of Commons spoke the general

neral opinion, when they determined that he ought not to be a Manager of the impeachment. During every stage of the trial, Mr. Francis betrayed in public an anxiety in favour of the prosecution, as great as he could have done if the worth of his immortal soul had been staked on the issue. He attended the Managers in their Committee, and sat in their box in Westminster Hall. I do not dispute his right to do both, nor do I call in question the purity of his motives: but this I will say, that if it be true, as Mr. Burke has declared, that they all learnt their lessons from Mr. Francis, it is ten thousand pities that they chose so ignorant a school-master.

Mr. Francis himself, I trust, will not impute any thing that I have said of him to resentment. God knows I feel none, either towards him, or the unfortunate person whose rancour and malignity exceeded all bounds. As to Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Grey, from the extent of information which they have displayed upon other subjects, I am convinced, that with common industry they could have attained such a knowledge of the affairs of India, as would have prevented them from taking the part they did, unless, which I am afraid was the case, they acted solely from party principles at first; and at a subsequent period, as Mr. Belfham truly observes, “ Westminster Hall was converted into a Lyceum, a  
“ School



“ School of Eloquence, and all was seen con-  
fused and magnified through the mist of rhetori-  
cal declamation.”

I have now touched upon the most important points in Mr. Belfham's History of the Affairs of India. I have exposed his prejudices, or his ignorance; for that he is prejudiced or ignorant no man will dispute; and if he wishes to be ranked higher than a party pamphleteer, he will correct his blunders in his next edition, or in the Continuation of his History.

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